A TREATISE

Of THAT being

BORN AGAIN

Without which

No MAN can be SAVED.

To which is added,

A DISCOURSE on the *Duty* and *Advantage* of *Singular Piety*. And some EXTRACTS from a *late Writer*, suited to the DESIGN of this Treatise.

By *S. WRIGHT*, D. D.
Preacher of the GOSPEL in *Black-Fryars*.

Illud verò saculo gratulor, repertos homines qui neusquam in Controversiis subtilibus tantum ponunt, quantum in verâ Vitæ emendatione, & quotidiano ad Sanctitatem profectu. Utinam & mea Scripta, aliquid ad hoc studium in Animis Hominum excitandum, inflammandumque, conferre possint: Tunc enim non frustra me vixisse hactenus existimem. Grotij ad Crellium. Ep.

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A

LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR:

Which is here inſerted, as the *Reaſon of his publiſhing the following Sheets.*

YOUR * * * Diſcourſes upon the weighty Subject of Regeneration, have ſo affected us, that we have Cauſe to *praiſe* GOD, who hath bleſs'd us

with the Opportunity of hearing them: And we hope a great many more have Reaſon to do the ſame. We could wiſh they might be more publick; * * * and we hope you will ſuffer them to go abroad into the World, for the edifying the Church of CHRIST; and to render the *Filthy, who will be filthy ſtill,* ſo much the more inexcuſable.

Had not we, through Grace, experienced ſomething of the *new Birth*, we ſhould not have enter'd within your *Meeting-Houſe*, being of the *Eſtabliſh'd Church:* But this has remov'd our Prejudices; and with St. *Peter, of a Truth we perceive that* GOD *is no Reſpecter of Perſons,* nor differing Opinions as merely touching Church Government; but in every Place, *He that worketh Righteouſneſs is accepted with him.*

We hope you will excuſe our great Freedom; we proteſt before GOD, we

we have no ſiniſter End. The Good of our Relatives and Neighbours is near our Hearts; and becauſe we humbly conceive thoſe *** SERMONS will conduce much thereto, we cannot but requeſt *of you*, what we have ſo earneſtly deſired among *our ſelves*, the Publication of them. And ſhall continue to pray for the Increaſe of GOD on your future Labours, as well as return Thanks for former Benefits. And remain

Yours,

J. J.

R. W.

E. E.

M. M.

THE

Author's Anſwer

To the foregoing

LETTER.

GENTLEMEN,

I Received your Letter with great Thankfulneſs to GOD, that had made the SERMONS you ſpeak of ſo ſerviceable to you: But conſidering how many uſeful *Treatiſes* of this *Nature* are extant already, I thought your Requeſt to *Print on this Subject*, might very well be *denied*. And when the Manner and Warmth of delivering thoſe SERMONS ſhould be a little forgotten, I was ready to conclude you

you might alter your Sentiments of them; or at leaſt, forbear farther to inſiſt on their being ſent to the Preſs.

In this Concluſion, I imagin'd my ſelf right for ſome Months, till your Applications were renewed; and a Perſon, for whom I have a particular Reſpect *, was engaged to purſue your Requeſt with a Reſolution to take no Denial. He has, indeed, ſaid ſo much to aſſure me of your *Sincerity*, and *hearty Concern* in this Matter, that I began to think it my *Duty* to comply with you: And where I apprehend any thing a *Duty*, I ſhall ſet *that* againſt all *Objections*, and all other *Conſiderations* in the World.

This Liberty, however, I have taken in complying with you: That I have choſen to give you thoſe Diſcourſes in a *different Form* to what you might expect: Tho' I hope in a Way that may anſwer your End, as fully, as if I had publiſh'd them in the *Form* of SERMONS. If you look upon every *Chapter* as a SERMON, and read it at once, you will find very little Difference from what it would have been, had the Whole been *printed* as it was *preach'd*. That I did not *ſay one* thing, and now *ſend*

* Mr. *Richier*.

you *another*, your *Friend*, that has taken the Pains of *tranſcribing* a great Part himſelf, will witneſs for me: And you yourſelves upon *reading* will, I doubt not, call to mind the *moſt* of what you here meet with.

The *firſt* SERMON you will find altered as to the *Method*, in ſome few Things; but you will eaſily know it again, when, every conſiderable Thought ſhall occur to you, in the ſame Words that were uſed before. In the Whole you will find ſome Additions; but, eſpecially, in the Third and Fourth Chapter. That *Directory* for the Devotion of a Soul *firſt turning* towards GOD, *p.* 93, to 95; And the Form of a *Covenant Dedication* to GOD, *p.* 98, *&c.* I thought highly proper to inſert in this Publication, tho' not deliver'd in your Hearing. And I found ſome Things neceſſary to be *added*, that I might render the *Evidences* of the *new Birth* more *uſeful*, and leſs liable to *Miſtakes*. Some Enlargements you will alſo find in the cloſing Addreſſes to ſeveral Sorts of Perſons: But I am perſuaded you will not think, upon a ſerious Peruſal, that I could have omitted any thing I have here added.

Whether

Whether this *Treatiſe* may be thought wiſe, or weak, by the Generality of thoſe that look into it, is what I ſhall not once enquire after. If it may prove a means *of turning any from the Evil of their Ways*, I ſhall account *that* the moſt grateful and deſirable Intelligence concerning it. For I think I am not miſtaken in declaring, That I had rather ſee *one* Perſon *ſmite upon his Breaſt*, and become a *true Penitent*, than to ſee a *Thouſand clapping* their *Hands*, whilſt they receive no *real Benefit* from what they hear or read.

If the following Pages may anſwer ſuch an End as this, I ſhall have Reaſon to be *thankful to you*, for putting me upon a Piece of Work, that I confeſs I had no mind to have gone about, at this Time. We live in an Age that is *ſet againſt* every thing of *this Nature*; and eſpecially, if it comes from the *Hand* of a *Diſſenter*. For which Reaſon you will not wonder that I have ſhewn ſuch a Backwardneſs to comply with your Requeſt. Till Men are more inclined to read and conſider Things, our Time and Pains in Printing muſt turn to very little Account.

However I would hope, you will promote the reading of this *Treatiſe* in all the *Families* where you have any Influence: Eſpecially on the *Lord's Day Evenings*, when thoſe are ſometimes called together, who on other Days live in the Neglect of Reading, and every religious Duty. A *Chapter* then read at a *Time*, will go thro' the *Whole* in a *Month*. Or if that be thought too much to read at once, each Chapter may be divided into two Parts, being ſo contrived that the Matter will very well allow for it. And by this means, ſome Perſons may be engaged to *hear*, what they would not be perſuaded, otherwiſe to *look into*, or to read by themſelves.

I was going, after all, to apologize for myſelf, in publiſhing a Treatiſe from *one Set* of SERMONS, which might have been much better done, by taking in ſome Things deliver'd in *other* SERMONS on the like Subjects: But I was immediately check'd by conſidering,—That it is the Bleſſing of GOD *alone* to which all *Succeſs* is owing, even in the beſt Attempts of this Nature: And therefore, ſince it hath pleaſed him to own the following Diſcourſes *already*, in ſuch a Man-

a Manner as to *You*; I ſhall, without any more Words, join with you in *hoping they may be bleſt to the Good of others.* What Almighty GOD ſees fit to ſet his *Seal upon*, I ſhall never affect to make *Apologies for*, whatever may be its After-Reception.

To *Him*, therefore, I humbly commit this *Treatiſe*; and to *your Service* I devote it in a particular Manner, as a Teſtimony of my being,

Your Reſpectful Friend,

Berry-Court,
Apr. 2. 1715. *and Servant,*

S. WRIGHT.

THE PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

IT *was with very little Expectation of* Acceptance, *that this Treatiſe was* firſt *ſent into the World. But as it* often *happens, that we meet with* leaſt, *where we expected moſt; ſo it is* ſometimes *order'd by a kind Providence, that we ſhould meet with* moſt, *where we had the leaſt Expectation.*

The

The many Letters and Accounts I have had, from thoſe of different Communions, upon each foregoing Impreſſion *of this Book, (many Thouſands of which are now ſpread,) led me to think, that the* Way *to an happy* AGREEMENT *among Chriſtians, is ſomething vaſtly different from the Schemes of* Politicians *about the* outward Forms *of Religion; and from the labour'd Deciſions of* learned Men, *in Matters of* Controverſy. *I cannot otherwiſe account for it, that ſo plain and unartful a Performance as this, ſhould be ſo well entertain'd, and frequently recommended, by People of* all Parties, *in a Nation ſo divided as ours, and at a Time when we have fallen into ſo many new Squabbles, and Prejudices againſt one another.*

This hath led me to conclude more ſtrongly than ever, that to preach *up true Piety, and to acquaint Men more with the* Spirit *of* Holineſs *and* Regeneration, *is the ſureſt and ſhorteſt Way to* Unity. *This would more effectually lay our Heats and Animoſities, than the inſiſting on any other* Expedients for Peace *which can be contriv'd. And after many other fruitleſs Attempts, we ſhall find this the concurrent Senſe of good Men in all Ages.*

Upon

Upon this View, I confeſs, it did not appear a diſagreeable Propoſal *that was made to me by a* Gentleman *of the* Church of England, *to write out and publiſh ſome* Conſiderations on the Intereſt of the univerſal Church, *with* other Meditations *of a late pious* Writer, *which are annexed to this Edition.*

But as that Gentleman deſired I ſhould alter, tranſpoſe, and leave out ſeveral things, in order to make thoſe Writings *more generally uſeful; I have accordingly done this, and indeed have taken a very great Liberty with them; yet ſo as to preſerve the main* Thoughts *and* Deſign *of the* Author. *Whether any thing may appear to* more Advantage, *than before it did, I will not pretend to determine; but certainly, by this Means, theſe things will be carried into more Hands, than if they had lain only in one* Form. *Thoſe that enter into the* true Spirit *of ſuch Writings, will value them wherever they meet with them, and by whomſoever recommended: Thoſe that* do not, *will be little better for any Method of connecting Things, or any Forms of Expreſſion that can be uſed on this Subject.*

The PREFACE.

It may probably be expected, that ſomething ſhould here be ſaid concerning the Author, *to whom this Regard is paid: And I apprehend it will contribute much to the Acceptance and Succeſs of the things propoſed by him, to give a ſhort and ſummary* Relation *of what has been publiſhed, by one intimately acquainted with him.*

Mr. HENRY WILLIAM LUDOLF *was by Deſcent a* German, *but by his* Travels, *acquainted with many other Parts of the World. He was ſkill'd in many* Languages, *for which the Family of the* Ludolfs *hath been famous in* Germany *theſe many Years. He was a conſiderable Stateſman, and for ſome time* SECRETARY *to the late* Prince GEORGE *of* DENMARK, *a Prince* of peaceful *and* grateful MEMORY *to this Nation. Above all, he was an excellent* Chriſtian; *one that pierced thro' the Outſide of Things, to the very Soul and Spirit of our holy Religion. And, as this is what principally tends to recommend his pious* Meditations, *from which the* Extracts *here publiſhed are taken, I ſhall mention ſome few eminent Inſtances of his great Regard to the* inward vital Power *of Chriſtianity,*

and

and ſo leave the Reader to the Peruſal of what is put into his Hand.

Our Author *was a great Student of the two oppoſite Principles, of* Light, *and* Darkneſs: *And a conſtant Obſerver of the Conflicts of theſe two Principles in their different* Tendencies, *to bear down the Souls of Men to Earth and Senſuality and Selfiſhneſs, or to carry them toward* GOD *and Perfection. Mens ſetting up* themſelves *for a* Rule, *and ſeeking to* ſerve *themſelves as their main* End, *was eſteemed by him the Bane of all true Religion. To this, he imputed Man's* firſt departure *from his* Creator; *and this he look'd upon to be the greateſt* Rebellion *that ever was, and the productive Principle of all other Sins and Corruptions. There are* three *general Heads, under which he thought all the Works of Darkneſs might be comprehended,* viz. Self-Intereſt, Self-Luſt, *and* Self-Conceit. *And indeed, what evil Works are there, that do not belong either to a catering and* laying in *for Self, or to a gratifying the* luſtful Appetites *and* Deſires *of Self, or to a* vain Conceit *and an Ambition to draw others to an* undue *Regard of this ſame Self? This it is, that hinders the Motion*

Motion of the Creature toward GOD, *and deſtroys* Good-will *among Men.*

Mr. Ludolf *hearing ſome Talk of a Project carried on in a certain Country, for uniting ſeveral Branches of Proteſtants into one religious* Form *and* Way *of Worſhip:* "*Why (ſaid he) the moſt* "*effectual Way to bring about a Union,* "*would be* firſt *to* unite People *to* GOD; "*for then would they readily be united* "*among themſelves. But whilſt that* "*dividing Spirit of* Self-Love *bears ſo* "*great a Sway in our* Eccleſiaſtical "Tranſactions, *we cannot poſſibly expect* "*any great and laſting Effect from an* "*Attempt of this Nature. What will* "*it ſignify (continued he) to exchange* "*one* Opinion *for another, and one* Form "*of Religion for another, if the corrupt* "*Bent of the Heart remains altogether* "*unchanged; and that Converſion neg-*"*lected, which is from* Darkneſs *to* "Light, *and from the* Power of Satan "*unto* GOD?

In civil *Affairs, he did not wonder at the* leading Men *of the World overturning one another, and injuring the* Publick, *nor at meaner People's falling into*

ſiniſter

ſiniſter Practices, and underhand Dealings, when he conſidered the Source of all this. "*How can it, ſaid he, be expect-*"*ed, a Man ſhould be truly faithful to* "*his* Country, *or to his* Neighbour, "*whilſt he is unfaithful to* GOD?" *All this* Faithleſsneſs *in Church and State, in publick and private Life, he fetched from the poiſonous Root of a corrupt* Self-Love.

By theſe Meaſures he did not only weigh the Conduct *of* others, *but carefully guided his* own. *When he travelled to* Judea, *and to that once famous City where the Chriſtian Religion drew its firſt Breath, and where it was propagated by its Author in its firſt and undefiled Luſtre; it was not an Itch of Curioſity that made him take ſo many toilſome Steps, but to make ſome Enquiry into the* State *of the* Churches *in thoſe Parts, and by the joint Endeavours of publick-ſpirited Men, to help them. His* Propoſal *for* promoting the Cauſe of Religion in the Churches of the LEVANT, *plainly ſhews how his Travels into thoſe Parts were improved. With Views of this Nature, he went to* Ruſſia, *to* Smyrna, *and* Conſtantinople, *to* Alexandria, *and other Places. His*

Learn-

Learning and Knowledge of many Languages, *he thought of no further Value than as improv'd for the Honour of God, and the Good of* others. *When he heard a Man cried up on account of his Parts, and Learning, and his Skill in Languages, his uſual Anſwer was,* "*But how doth* "*he improve all this? What Uſe doth* "*he make of it? How many Souls doth* "*he bring over to* JESUS CHRIST, "*by his Languages, and his other Ta-*"*lents? Whoſe* Ends, *and* Intereſt *doth* "*he ſeek? his* own, *or his* Maſter's? "*A wiſe Prince is more pleaſed with one* "*that ſerves him faithfully, though in* "*the meaneſt Degree, than with one* "*placed in the higheſt Poſt of Dignity,* "*whoſe Head is fill'd with Deſigns for* "*carrying on his* own Ends, *and* private "Intereſt. *Beſides, if a Man had learn-*"*ed all the Languages of the World, yet* "*if he ſhould not be able to converſe with* "*his* LORD *by learning his Language* "*alſo, all would ſignify nothing.*" *He ſeem'd to think that the Uſe of Languages was not to make an oſtentatious Shew of them in a Man's own Country, but rather to ſpread divine and uſeful Knowledge to other Parts of the World. With this View, after his Travels from the* Eaſtern *Countries, he publiſhed the New Teſta-*

ment

ment in vulgar Greek, *to be ſent into thoſe Parts.*

He was ſo intent upon the main Scope *of Religion, that he look'd upon all outward Privileges and Forms, as of little Importance, compar'd with the* Creator's being again glorified in the Creature. *This was his Way of deſcribing the* main Scope *of Religion. He was very ſparing in extolling one* Form *of Worſhip above another, and cared not to go about arguing People out of their* uſual Way. *By this Means, he now and then incurr'd the Diſpleaſure of ſome in all* Parties, *particularly of thoſe who are moſt* ſhort-ſighted *in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs; ſuch as meaſure Religion not by what it is in its divine Amplitude, but by its Appearance to an Eye tinctur'd with* Fondneſs *and* Prejudice. *His Eſteem, however, was not leſſen'd, with thoſe who view Religion in its* eſſential Goodneſs; *as it was firſt eſtabliſh'd by* CHRIST, *and not as it was afterward modell'd by Men. If ſome Churches did pretend to a more* refined *Mode, and* purer *Doctrine, he would have that Refinement and Purity ſhine forth in the* Life *and* Manners. *The primitive* Faith, Love, Humility, Meekneſs, Self-Reſignation, *and other* Goſpel Virtues,

tues, *he would have to be look'd upon as ſo many inſeparable Companions to a Form of* ſound Words, *and to an* Apoſtolical Conſtitution.

Thus, was this good Man for promoting a Spirit of univerſal, impartial Piety, *in all Nations: not only working out his own Salvation, but diligent in contriving for, and endeavouring the Salvation of others: Yet after all, he eſteemed himſelf ſo much an* unprofitable Servant, *that in his* laſt Sickneſs *he deſired the Miniſter that prayed with him* * *to beg* Pardon *particularly,* " *for his not having* " *been* faithful enough in the Ser- " vice of GOD, *and of his* Fellow-Crea- " tures.

He went through great Pains of Body, and through ſuch Tryals *and Conflicts of* Soul, *as are little known to the Chriſtians of this Day.* " *People have now* " *found out a Way to Heaven ſo eaſy,* (*ſays the* Writer *of* Ludolf's *Character*) " *and ſo free from Temptations, that*

* Mr. *Boehm*, Chaplain to the late *Prince George*, from whoſe *Funeral Sermon* for Mr. *Ludolf* the Account here given of him is taken.

" *it*

" *it ſeems altogether different from what*
" *it was of Old, when it was called a*
" narrow Way, *and preach'd up as ſuch*
" *by thoſe that* firſt *eſtabliſhed the* Chri-
" ſtian Religion. *Our modern Chri-*
" *ſtians have cleverly dropt the* harſher
" *Doctrines of* Mortification, Contri-
" tion, Compunction, inward Sorrow,
" *and* ſpiritual Combat, *and all that*
" *belongs to their* taking up a Croſs;
" *and have modelled Religion at laſt in-*
" *to a Mode, wherein it begins to ap-*
" *pear* faſhionable, *and ſo may in Time*
" *be lik'd by the profaneſt* Worldling *that*
" *can be.*

There is too much Juſtice in this Obſervation; and great Need there is of the utmoſt Endeavours, to draw Mens Attention more to the ſubſtantial *and* vital *Parts of Chriſtianity.* GOD *grant that the publiſhing ſuch things as theſe may conduce ſomething, toward promoting the* divine Life *in Men! With which it is alſo greatly deſirable, that all* inwardly, ſerious, *and* true-hearted *Chriſtians, might agree in ſome ſuch Scheme, as that which our Author has rightly judg'd to be the* Intereſt *of the* univerſal Church; *and that they might find out ſome Ways of more* eaſily *and* thoroughly *knowing one another,*

another, and of promoting and ſtrengthening their common Intereſt. There are no ſecular Party Views, that deſerve with this to be compar'd, or ſo much as named.

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I. *To*

I. *To be Born again, is to have something done* in *us, and* for *us, which cannot be done* by *us,* 9, 10
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Becauſe

Becauſe he does not accept of CHRIST *as a Teacher and Inſtructor*, ib. 38. *He is not intereſted in* CHRIST's Death *as an* Atonement, 40.

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JOHN iii. 3.

Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Conference betwixt our SAVIOUR and *Nicodemus*, out of which theſe words are taken, has always been thought a very conſiderable, and by ſome, a very dark and myſterious

part of Sacred Writ. Thoſe of *Nicodemus*'s Temper and Sentiments have been ready, in every Age, to fall in with his Conduct, and his way of Arguing: Whilſt others, that have been more under the Influence and Teaching of a Divine Spirit, have ſeen the Excellency and Importance of our SAVIOUR's *Doctrine*.

The *Time*, in which this Ruler came to our LORD, was a very apt Repreſentation of his *State*. He came in the *Night*, and he appears to have been ſadly in the *Dark* as to what concerns the *Goſpel* Diſpenſation, and his Salvation by it. He had been very much affected, it ſeems, with the *mighty Works* of our BLESSED LORD; *for*, ſays he, *no Man can do the Miracles that thou doſt, except* GOD *be with him:* But his Preaching and his *Words* were very differently received: They were thought to be ſo far from being *Heavenly* and *Divine*, that they were not reconcilable to *common Senſe: How can theſe Things be?*

I am afraid this is too much the Caſe of many in our own Times: Who, while they acknowledge that JESUS CHRIST is worthy to be own'd in the brighteſt Day, and before all the World; yet content themſelves with ſome obſcure, and partial Regards to him. How many are there, who

who profeſs to venerate him as a *Teacher ſent from* GOD, that yet in this grand and leading Point, the *being born again*, are perfect Strangers to him? yea, what is worſe, unwilling to be inſtructed by him? They are either cavilling againſt, or explaining away, the proper and ſpiritual Meaning of this Doctrine.

Some alſo there are, that have followed this Metaphor of the *new Birth*, with others of the like nature, ſo far, as to render it wholly myſtical and unintelligible; making no juſt Obſervations upon the more plain and expreſs Texts of Scripture, where, without Metaphors, the nature of Regeneration is ſet in a clearer Light. Such miſtaken ways of treating this Subject, I ſhall endeavour to avoid. And ſince our SAVIOUR has ſummoned our Attention to what he here ſays, by prefixing a double Aſſeveration, to atteſt the Truth of it,—— *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee*, &c. I hope, I need not multiply Words to engage a ſerious Application of your Minds, to ſtudy, and make a right Uſe of what ſhall now be laid before you.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the Doctrine of being Born again, is carefully laid down.

WHEN we read ſo peremptory a Determination, that *none* ſhall *ſee*, or enter into, *the Kingdom of GOD*, but ſuch as are *Born again*; it is reaſonable to expect, every Soul that has any Hope or Deſire of being ſaved, ſhould be put upon the moſt ſollicitous Enquiries after the Meaning and Import of this Expreſſion. And therefore I ſhall ſet myſelf to give ſuch an Account of it, as that every one who reads the following Treatiſe ſeriouſly, may both be helped to *underſtand*, and *experience*, this ſecond Birth. In doing this I would aim at,

FIRST, Informing the Mind.
THEN, Awakening and Convincing the Conſcience.
AFTER THAT, Directing the Practice.
AND FINALLY, Settling and Compoſing the Spirit; by ſtating the Evidences of this mighty Change.

In *this Chapter* I ſhall endeavour to *inform the Mind* of the attentive Reader, by giving him as clear and ſatisfying Thoughts as I can, of the *nature* of this Birth.

It was ſomething of which *Nicodemus*, even as a *Jew*, and a *Ruler* in *Iſrael*, might be ſuppos'd to have a previous Knowledge; or, at leaſt, to have been ſufficiently prepar'd for the Reception of it: For otherwiſe our SAVIOUR would not, in ſuch a manner as we find he does, have reprov'd his Ignorance and Slowneſs of Apprehenſion; *Art thou a Maſter of* Iſrael, *and knoweſt not theſe things?*

The Writings of *Moſes* might inform him,— that when Man firſt came out of the hands of his Maker, he had a Soul breathed into him, by which he was render'd wiſer and more excellent than the Beaſts of the Earth: And from hence *Nicodemus* might have concluded— that the ſame Almighty Power could, by a farther Inſpiration and Influence, at pleaſure raiſe Man to a higher and nobler State and Condition, than that, in which he now found himſelf, and the reſt of Mankind.

The Writings of *David* and the *Prophets* do alſo deſcribe a Perſon's being

Pſal. li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *and other places.*

brought into a *State of Grace* and Favour with GOD, by having a *clean Heart created* in him, and a *new Heart given to him.* And this was ſo particularly foretold of the *Goſpel Times*, that it muſt be ſtrange Inadvertency in *Nicodemus* not to reflect on thoſe Paſſages, which in ſuch a likeneſs of Expreſſion, deſcribe the very ſame Change that our SAVIOUR here calls being *born again.*

But that which yet farther condemns this *Jewiſh Ruler*, was, (according to Dr. *Whitby*) a prevailing and common Notion amongſt the *Jews*,— that when any Man became a *Proſelyte* to their Religion, *He was to be look'd upon as an Infant new born.*

Theſe ſeveral things may, all of 'em, be very helpful to our underſtanding this Doctrine at preſent; and I would rather chuſe to look upon 'em with ſuch a view, than as merely ſerving to aggravate the Fault of *Nicodemus.*

From our LORD's explaining himſelf in this matter, 'tis evident — that to be *Born again* includes ſomething both *External*, and *Internal: Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

Now this being *born of Water*, or made a *Proſelyte by Baptiſm*, was ſo intelligible, that we find a bare Mention of it is thought ſufficient. But however Men may value their outward Privileges, yet if theſe are reſted in, and the *greateſt* Streſs be laid where the Goſpel lays the *leaſt*, the Hopes and Pretenſions of ſuch will avail them very little.

'Tis a being *Born* of the *Spirit* that is chiefly inſiſted on: And without this, none were to be look'd upon as Members of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, conſidered either as a Kingdom of *Grace* or *Glory*.

I know not how we can better comprehend all this in a few Words, than by ſaying, with one of our *Engliſh* Expoſitors, — "He that will enter into the "State of the Goſpel, muſt be bapti-"zed; and He that will enter into a "State of Grace, and be fitted for Glo-"ry, muſt be renewed." Thus much is very plainly expreſs'd in the *Epiſtle* to *Titus*; *According to his mercy he ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit. iii. 5.

Ignorance of this Work of the Bleſſed SPIRIT, and a vain Boaſting of External Ordinances and Advantages, we have reaſon to fear, is the Ruin of Multitudes.

Hence it is that Men, who profeſs the Chriſtian Name, and are admitted into the Chriſtian Church, are yet notorious for their ill Lives. And whereas, at *firſt*, it was the Glory of the Goſpel to change the worſt of Sinners; it is *now* reproach'd by many, as patronizing even the worſt of Crimes. Chriſtianity has ſometimes *found* Men in a State of Brutiſh Senſuality; but where it has ſavingly prevail'd, it has not *left* them in ſuch a Condition. *Be not deceived*, (ſays the *Apoſtle* to the *Corinthians*) *neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers,— nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of* God. And though it is added, *ſuch were ſome of you*; yet we ought carefully to obſerve the Change that was wrought in them; *ye are waſhed, ye are ſanctified, ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our* God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

So that to be intereſted in this Work of the Spirit, is of the utmoſt Importance to us; and in order to that, 'tis highly requiſite we ſhould have a right Notion and Underſtanding of it. I ſhall therefore, according to the beſt and moſt regular Thoughts I have been able to form of this matter, explain it farther to you in the following Particulars.

I. *To*

I. *To be born again, is to have ſomething done in us and for us, which cannot be done by us.*

This is, beyond all Doubt and Controverſy, the plain Senſe of Scripture. Leſs than this cannot be meant, by thoſe many high Expreſſions which the ſacred Writers frequently uſe: Such as,— being *created again in* CHRIST JESUS, — and being made *new Creatures*;— being *raiſed* to *Newneſs of Life*, even as CHRIST was *raiſed from the Dead* by the Glory of the FATHER. So that, adding theſe Expreſſions to this I am upon, [a *being born again*,] all laid together muſt undoubtedly ſignify, That ſomething is effected for us, and wrought in us, which is intirely owing to the Power and Grace of GOD.

I ſhall ſpeedily endeavour to guard againſt any falſe and ill Conſequences, that Men may be tempted to draw from hence; but in the mean time it muſt be maintained,— that Regeneration is the Work of the HOLY SPIRIT. There is one Paſſage in the 1ſt of *John*'s *Goſpel*, the 13th, that does expreſly deny any other Agency in this matter. *Which were born*, ſays the Evangeliſt, *not of Blood, nor of the Will*

of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. The meaning of that Place is this: To become the *Sons of* God, we muſt be *born of Him*; and that in ſuch a ſort, as is not by *Blood*, or by any thing communicated to us in our firſt Generation:—Nor according to the *Will of the Fleſh*; that is, any natural Inclinations in our ſelves to what is Holy and Godlike:—Nor of the *Will of Man*; that is, the Perſuaſions and Influence of others like our ſelves: But it is wholly owing to the Agency and Grace of God. So in the 1ſt of *James* the 18th we are told—that *of his own Will begat he us.* Theſe, with other places that

Ezek. xi. 19. promiſe a *new Heart*; and

Jer. xxiv. 7. —xxxii. 40. that God *will take away the ſtony Heart out of our Fleſh, and will give us Hearts of Fleſh*; *and that he will put his Fear into our Hearts, and write his Law in our inward parts*; and the Declaration, that

Rom. ix. 16. *it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth Mercy:* Theſe, I ſay, and ſuch like Texts of Scripture, undoubtedly prove that the *Change*, here called the *ſecond Birth*, is of God.

From

From hence therefore, before we advance any thing farther, we may draw this *Concluſion*;— That ſince ſomething is to be done *in* us, and *for* us, which cannot be done *by* us, we *ſhould be very earneſt and unwearied in our Application to* GOD *for his Grace and Spirit.* This is evidently the moſt natural and juſt way of arguing, however ſome Men may indulge to the quite contrary. There is certainly an *aukwardneſs* in Thinking, as well as Acting. And when this is encouraged by a ſlothful Temper, or a Prejudice againſt any particular Set of Men, and their Opinions; or when it is ſupported and improved by the Suggeſtions of the Devil, it is hardly to be rectified. For otherwiſe one would think it impoſſible that ever the *Metaphors* — of being *created anew*,— *raiſed to Newneſs of Life*,— and being *born again*, ſhould be pleaded by Men, as if they were *literally* to be underſtood. Which is downright to ſay— that an unregenerate Man has no *Reaſon*, no *Life*, no *Being*. The ſame Almighty Power and Efficacy by which we were made at firſt, and ſhall be raiſed at laſt, is undoubtedly neceſſary to our Renovation at preſent: But then upon a Conviction of this, we ſhould with the greateſt

Concern apply our ſelves to *Him* who has this All-ſufficient Power and Grace. Thus we are wont to do in other Caſes where our Intereſt is concerned; to be very earneſt in ſolliciting ſuch, as have it in their power to do that for us, which we are not able to do for our ſelves. And this is what the Sacred Scriptures every where require, and that in the plaineſt Expreſſions, in the caſe of Regeneration; as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew more fully at the cloſe of this Chapter.

II. That which is done in us and for us when we are ſaid to be *born again*, I take to be this; — *the infuſing of ſome inward Principle of Life and Action, to which we are naturally Strangers; and by communicating of which, ſuch a Life begins, as ſhall laſt for ever.*

There is ſomething, which ſo far prevails over all the Powers, Deſires, and Reliſhes of the ſenſitive and animal Nature, as to bring it into a thorough Subjection and Subſerviency. Hence it is, that a Man finds his corrupt Inclinations as powerfully croſs'd, and as effectually kept under, by ſomething *within* himſelf, as if he was debating the Matter with a Being

different

different from himſelf. And he therefore acts under the controlling Power of ſomething *ſuperior* to himſelf. If any Man that reads this, thinks it unintelligible, I can only aſſure him in the Words of our SAVIOUR, toward the Cloſe of his Conference with *Nicodemus*; *Verily, verily we ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen, and ye receive not our Witneſs.* Our SAVIOUR knew it by Intuition, and Obſervation of what was done upon *others:* Thoſe that are Regenerate know it by Experience of what has been done in *themſelves:* And, however thoſe that are Strangers to this Work of Grace, may refuſe to receive the Witneſs, yet it is nevertheleſs true and real.

This Principle of a new Life, I have ſaid is *infus'd* into us, that it may be *ſought* for, and eſteem'd as ſomething ſupernatural. It is not only a *Habit* of the Mind, but the Spring and *Cauſe* of every good and gracious Habit in us. From hence, probably, a Principle of Grace is called the *Root of the Matter*; to ſignify to us (among other things) that it is really different from the Soil in which it is planted: And that it is ſomething brought to us by a Divine Hand. It is a *Root* that would otherwiſe have remained foreign to our Nature, and we ſhould for ever have been barren,

barren, and deſtitute of thoſe *Fruits* that are the Product of it.

I have choſen to ſay farther, that *by communicating this Principle of Grace, ſuch a Life begins as ſhall laſt for ever*, to put you upon obſerving this very comfortable Propriety in the uſe of the *Metaphor* of being *born again*; namely, our entring into ſuch a State of Being, as much better deſerves the Name of *Life*, than that which we are born to in this World. In our *Firſt Birth* we are born to *die*; In our *Second*, we are born to *live for ever*. In our *Firſt Birth* we enter upon a manner of Exiſtence ſuited to a changeable and periſhing State of Things: In our *Second Birth* we begin a manner of living ſuited to an eternal Duration and Happineſs. As, therefore, the new Life, which hereby we receive, will ſurvive the former, the Commencement of it is very fitly called a *new Birth*.

There are *two Concluſions* I would draw from hence, for the better and fuller ſettling of this Point.

1. If there be ſuch an inward Principle of Life and Action communicated in our Regeneration, it will follow---*that a mere outward Change, and altering the Courſe of our Lives, is not ſufficient to a Perſon's being born again.*

It is poſſible a Man may be reclaimed from a looſe, and vicious way of living, only by external Motives and Inducements: Or, by changing open and notorious Sins, for more ſecret and concealed ones, there may be a *ſeeming* Alteration, when there is not a *real one:* Or one Vice, it may be, is forſaken, in order to fall into another: Or Men may be wearied out with their Sins; and ſo are not properly ſaid to *leave* them, but to *outlive* them. However, this is certain,—That a civil *outward* Deportment may be maintained, where there is nothing of the Power of Religion at the Heart. For ſo the *Apoſtle Paul* tells us (who was far from magnifying any thing in himſelf before his Converſion) that as *touching the Law*, meaning the outward Obſervance of it, *he was blameleſs.* Phil. iii. 6. So that we have abundant Reaſon to keep up the Diſtinction betwixt *Reſtraining* and *Renewing* Grace.

2. If it be only a new Principle of Life and Action that is infus'd in Regeneration, it will follow, —— *That the new Birth does not give us new, and different natural Powers, and Faculties, from thoſe which we had before.*

As

As we have the ſame Body, and bodily Organs; ſo we have alſo the ſame Souls and intellectual Faculties, that we had in our natural State. It is certain, that a Change very great paſſes upon us; but then it is as certain, that we remain phyſically the *ſame* afterwards: That is, the Principle of Life and Action which is infus'd into us, new models our Souls, our Tempers, and the whole of our Behaviour; but it does not alter our Make as to any eſſential Part of us. As we have the ſame Eyes, Ears, and Senſes; ſo we have alſo the ſame Underſtanding, Will, and Affections, that we had in an Unregenerate State: But theſe are all differently uſed and employ'd to what they were before. And the Change is great enough, to ſupport me in what I have farther to advance under another Head of Explication; to which I haſten.

III. When we are thus ſaid to be *born-again, we do as truly become new Creatures, as if we could in a natural Senſe be born afreſh, or had other kind of Beings given to us.*

There needs no other than the *different* Uſe and Exerciſe of the *ſame* reaſonable Powers,

Powers, to make us either as *Brutes*, or as *Angels*. And indeed, the Change would not be ſo great, to ſee a Clod of Earth brighten into a Star; (ſince we know that an earthly Body can reflect the Rays of the Sun;) as to ſee a poor brutiſh Sinner become a Saint, ſhining with all the radiant Graces of a Chriſtian, and ripening for Glory.

Such is the Change that is made by the Grace and Spirit of GOD in the *new Birth*, that it very much reſembles the firſt Creation of this viſible World; wherein Light was brought out of Darkneſs, and Beauty out of Deformity, and Harmony out of Confuſion. For ſo the Mind in Regeneration is enlightened; and all its jarring diſorderly Paſſions and Affections are brought under Rule and Government. Thoſe Powers and Capacities that lay wholly unexercis'd and unactive, are now taught to exert themſelves. And thoſe that were buſied in a fruitleſs, or a hurtful manner, now are exalted to the moſt uſeful and comfortable Employments. In the *Apoſtle*'s comprehenſive Language, *all* old *things are paſſed away, and all things are become new.*

The Diſtinction indeed between the Regenerate and Unregenerate, is not at preſent viſible enough to convince the World

World of common Spectators, that it is *ſo great* as really it is: But at the Day of Judgment, when thoſe things that are now hid ſhall be revealed, the Difference ſhall be manifeſted to all. He that looks only on the rough Surface of the Seas, and obſerves the Mire and Dirt which is caſt out by its Waves, may imagine there is nothing amiable or deſirable in it: But he that has dived to its Bottom, and diſcovered the Jewels and Treaſures which lie buried there, will form a very different Judgment. The Man that is renewed, is greatly enriched by the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of GOD; but yet there may be no Beauty or Excellency that ſhall appear to ſuch as look no farther than the outſide, and obſerve only the Corruptions that ariſe in his outward Actions and Converſation: But when Things that now lie hid ſhall be diſcovered, it will be quite otherwiſe. Hence it is that we read ſo often in Scripture of the *World*'s *not knowing* ſuch as belong to CHRIST: And St. *John* ſpeaking of thoſe that were *now* the *Sons of* GOD, adds, that *it does not yet appear what we ſhall be.*

1 John iii. 2.

This, however, muſt be maintain'd; That, where things are ſpiritually diſcerned, and where there is a cloſe and ſtrict

Enquiry

Enquiry into the Character of him that is ſaid to be *born again*, he does appear even at preſent *more excellent than his Neighbour*; and ſuch a one *knows himſelf* to be quite another Perſon, than he was in his firſt and natural State. He has a *new Image* and Likeneſs ſtamp'd upon him, which grows more and more viſible, both to himſelf, and all about him: His Behaviour and Converſation will be ſuch, as to *ſhew forth the Virtues*, and Excellencies, of *Him who hath called him.*

Now from this Head two things are deducible.

1. That a pretended *honouring the Grace of* God, and *a preſumptuous Confidence in it, whilſt Men go on in their Sins, will by no means argue that they are in a State of Grace.*

Mens *changing* their Opinions, or getting *new* Notions in Religion, will not prove that they are *born again*, if their Lives and Actions be not changed, ſo as to render them quite other Perſons than they were in their natural corrupt State. This is ſo obvious, that I ſhould not ſo much as have mention'd it, had I not met with Inſtances of Thoſe, who have pretended to talk of *Free Grace* at ſuch a rate, as if they hoped to be *ſaved* by it, when they were

were utter Strangers to the *Renewing Power* of it. And ſome there are, who have diſtinguiſh'd themſelves by a Set of Principles, whereby they pretend to magnify the Riches of God's Grace in its abounding *towards* them, when at the ſame time it has no ſuitable Effect and Influence *upon* them. As if, by a Decree in their favour, God had engaged himſelf at all adventures to bring them to Heaven, whether they were made *fit* for it or not: Or as if they thought miraculous Grace would prepare 'em for it ſome *new way*, and not by the ordinary appointed Means of the Goſpel. For, if they would receive the Aſſurances of Grace as they are ſettled in the Goſpel, they would never pretend to an Intereſt in the Lord Jesus Christ, without ſuch a Change as I am ſpeaking of: Since 'tis as expreſs as Words can make it, *if any Man be in* Christ, *he is a new Creature.* Thoſe Perſons then will find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, who, inſtead of being really changed, truſt to ſome ineffectual Speculations: Theſe will not avail them at laſt, how much ſoever at preſent they may be pleas'd with them, or how zealous ſoever they may appear for them.

2 Cor. v. 17.

2. For

2. For the ſame Reaſon it will alſo follow,—That *no Gifts or Attainments, how great and eminent ſoever they be, will paſs for this new Birth, if there be not a new Life.*

Judas, with all his Gifts, was but a Loſt Man. *Simon Magus*, notwithſtanding all the Wonders which Hiſtory ſays he wrought, yet had neither *part nor lot in this matter*; Acts viii. 21. his Heart and Life being unchanged and unrenewed. What the *Apoſtle* ſays of *Charity*, muſt be ſaid of this *Change:* Tho' I had all *Languages* that have been ſpoken by Men, yea, though I had the *Tongue of an Angel*; 1 Cor. xiii. *beginning.* and with theſe the intellectual Abilities of Men and Angels too; tho' *I could underſtand all Myſteries* and Sciences; tho' I had the *Faith of ſuch as could work Miracles*; or was ready to *impoveriſh* my ſelf *in giving Alms to the Poor*; yea, though I might give my *Body to be burned*, as a Martyr to the beſt Cauſe in the World; yet if I am not *a new Creature*, all will avail me nothing. I heartily wiſh that ſuch as are valuing themſelves upon their Attainments in *human Learning*, or upon their *outward Profeſſion* of Religion, and their *Sufferings* in common with others on account

count of their Profeſſion, would allow themſelves to enter into ſuch a way of Thinking as this. And whilſt ſome are valuing themſelves upon their Conformity to the National Church; and others upon their ſtrict Adherence to what they apprehend the purer Worſhip and Appointments of the Goſpel; it were well if both would lay to heart ſuch a Text as that,—*neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a new Creature*, Gal. vi. 15.

IV. *This being born again, is in ſome reſpect like our being born at firſt, Inſtantaneous and Perfect; but, in other reſpects, Regeneration may be look'd upon as Gradual and Progreſſive.*

When firſt a Man is ſaid to be born from above, he has every Principle of Grace and Goodneſs, that is neceſſary to conſtitute him a Child of God: Though as yet all is but in Miniature, and very inconſiderable, compared with what it may, in time, grow to. The new Creature is form'd, not like a *Statue*, in the making of which one Limb or Feature may be carv'd out and compleated, whilſt all the reſt lie ſhapeleſs, and in the rough

Stone: But it is form'd like a *Child* that is born into the World, which has all the Parts of the human Body at firſt, tho' very ſmall and little, and muſt have time to grow to their full Size and Perfection. Thoſe that are *born of the Spirit* have the Divine Image and Likeneſs, as to every eſſential Part, drawn upon the Soul; but yet they are capable of continual Improvements, till they become perfect, *as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

Hence it is that the *Apoſtle* teaches us by his own Example, not to take up an Opinion of ourſelves, that our Attainments are ſufficient as ſoon as we are thus renewed: Tho' we could ſay, with him, that *what things* formerly *were Gain* to us, *thoſe we* now *count Loſs for* CHRIST; yea, [that we are ſo much alter'd from what we were in our natural State] that we *count all things* [even the beſt and greateſt in the World] Phil. iii. 8. but *Loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledge of* CHRIST JESUS our LORD; yet we are not to look upon our ſelves as already *perfect:* But this we are farther to do, *forgetting* ver. 13. *the Things that are behind, to reach forth unto thoſe things which are before.* And another *Apoſtle* calls upon us to *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our*

our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

This, I thought proper to make a diſtinct Head, for the ſake of theſe *two* Concluſions.

1. *There can be no State betwixt that of the Regenerate, and the Unregenerate.*

Whatever Preparations there may be for ſuch a Change, yet theſe are certainly to be diſtinguiſhed from the Change it ſelf. All Men are either born again, or not; there is no middle State that can be allowed: For that would infer, if any died in ſuch a State, that they were diſpoſed of accordingly in the other World; and appointed to ſome intermediate Place betwixt Heaven and Hell. Which is a Notion I need not ſtay to expoſe. There is ſomething of more immediate Conſequence to be guarded againſt, which I had chiefly in my eye, upon the mention of this Head; namely, to prevent Mens taking up with any of thoſe things that are *preparatory* to this new Birth, as if they were *really to paſs for it.* Hence it is, that many have been carried into very ſad and deſtructive Miſtakes; who have imagin'd, that ſome ſhort-liv'd *Convictions*, and ineffectual Purpoſes and *Reſolutions*, might paſs for this Change; or that

that ſome *partial* Regards to their *Duty*, which have ariſen from their firſt ſerious Impreſſions, have been ſufficient to denominate them *new Creatures*. And ſo reſting in what has been only *preparatory*, they have at laſt fallen even from *that*.

2. *There may be ſuch as are truly Regenerate and born again, that are yet very weak in Grace, and very little in their Spiritual Stature.*

'Tis poſſible ſuch a *Change* may be *wrought* upon Men, when yet the *infant State* of the new Creature may hardly diſcover that it is ſo. However, if any Man be really paſs'd from *Death* to *Life*, this Life will ſhew it ſelf by growing every day more vigorous and active: And if any Man be paſs'd from *Darkneſs* to *Light*, this *Light*, tho' very dim at preſent, will *ſhine more and more unto a perfect Day*. But for this Reaſon we ſhould not rely on any thing that *has been done* for us, ſo as to grow ſecure or negligent, upon an Apprehenſion that all is ſafe and well; for if what has been wrought in us be indeed of God, it will be continually advancing till it comes to Perfection. As for God, *his work is perfect*. This Work of our Regeneration is ſo: Perfect at firſt, in every

Prov. iv. 18.

Deut. xxxii. 4.

eſſential *Part*; and therefore fixes in us a Regard to *all* God's Commandments: And perfect at laſt, in every attainable *Degree*; and therefore makes our *Growth* and Improvement neceſſary.

V. *This Change, which is called the new Birth, may be, and commonly is effected by the outward Means of Grace.*

As in the 3d of *John*, we are ſaid to be *born of the Spirit*; ſo in the *Epiſtle of James*, Regeneration is aſcribed to the *Word of* God. And in the former Place we read of being *born of Water*, [that is by *Baptiſm*] as well as the *Spirit*. 'Tis certain that outward Ordinances and Appointments are, of *themſelves*, inſufficient to produce ſuch an Effect; but it is as certain, from the whole Current of Scripture, that the Spirit of God does make uſe of ſuch *means*, and ordinarily renews the Heart in and by theſe.

There have been, indeed, miraculous Productions of this kind; and God has ſometimes manifeſted himſelf to thoſe that *enquired not after him*; yea, to thoſe who, with a *perſecuting blaſphemous* Temper of Mind, have ſet themſelves *againſt him*: But ſuch Caſes are to be looked upon, juſt

in

in the ſame manner as we do upon the miraculous Cure of Diſeaſes; or a miraculous Supply of bodily Wants, which ſome, upon *extraordinary* Occaſions, have obtained. Such Miracles, both of Grace and Providence, were neceſſary to the firſt ſettling of Chriſtianity in the World: And they may be wrought again whenever, and where-ever it pleaſes GOD ſuddenly to reſtore and advance the Credit of decay'd Religion. But I think theſe Caſes ſhould no more be taken into our common Accounts of Regeneration, than the removing of the moſt *inveterate* Diſtempers with a *Word*, or the feeding of *five thouſand* with *five Loaves and two Fiſhes*, are to be taken into the uſual Method of healing our Diſeaſes, or providing our daily Bread.

That Man would certainly be accounted very inconſiderate, and vain in his Expectations, that ſhould ſit ſtill and refuſe to ſeek after and provide his neceſſary Food; becauſe he reads that *Elijah* was *fed by Ravens*, and the *Clouds rain'd down Manna on the* Iſraelites. And is it not every whit as wild and unjuſtifiable, for Men to neglect the Means of Grace, and expect to be converted by ſome miraculous *Appearance of* CHRIST from Heaven, becauſe the *Apoſtle Paul* was ſo? or to pro-

miſe themſelves that they ſhall be renewed *ſuddenly* on their *Death-Bed*, becauſe the *Thief* on the *Croſs* was ſavingly changed in his laſt Moments?

He that can be ſo wretchedly miſled, as in this laſt Caſe, may as well advance one Step farther, and promiſe himſelf that he ſhall go to *Heaven* without ſeeing *Death*; becauſe he reads of one, that in a *fiery Chariot* was taken up thither. Yea, I will venture to ſay, that on this account, he has *more* reaſon to expect a Tranſlation, than he has to look for ſuch a miraculous Renovation: Becauſe he has *two* Inſtances of Perſons being taken to Heaven without Dying; (viz. *Enoch* and *Elias*;) but he has only *one* Inſtance in the whole Bible, of a Converſion ſo extraordinary as that of the *Crucified Malefactor*.

Let the *New Birth* I have been explaining, be look'd upon then, as a Change that is generally wrought by the outward and ordinary Means of Grace. And let it be conſidered, that there is no Caſe in which thoſe Means would fail of obtaining ſuch an End, could we procure the Bleſſing of GOD in and with them.

From hence we may ſafely conclude,

1. *That Men ought to apply themſelves, with*

with great Diligence, to theſe appointed Means.

As we learn from what has been ſaid, that none ſhould encourage themſelves to hope for extraordinary Grace, in the Neglect of the common and ordinary Method of Salvation; ſo no Man can reaſonably hearken to deſpondent Thoughts, whilſt he does, in a Way of Duty, cry to GOD for renewing Grace and Mercy. *What Means* are to be uſed, and *what Method* we are to take in our Applications to GOD, I ſhall lay before you in the 3d *Chapter*: My Buſineſs here, is only to eſtabliſh this Concluſion, — That we ought to look upon the *new Birth*, as a Change that *may be* attained by us; and ſo to ſeek after it with ſuitable Concern and Diligence.

And if this was not really the Caſe, wherefore ſhould GOD call upon thoſe that are in a State of Corruption, to *caſt away from them all their Tranſgreſſions, and to make them new Hearts and new Spirits?* Ezek. xviii. 31. Wherefore ſhould he declare with ſo much Solemnity, *As I live I have no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live?* Ch. xxxiii. 11. And then, wherefore ſhould he call after Sin-

ners with ſo much Importunity, *Turn ye, Turn ye, for why will ye die?* Wherefore ſhould our SAVIOUR put Men upon *ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait Gate?* And bid us *ask*, *ſeek*, and *knock*; aſſuring us, that GOD *gives the Spirit* to them that believingly and importunately *ask him?* Wherefore ſhould one Apoſtle urge us, *to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling?* and another, *to draw nigh to* GOD, as one that is willing and ready to *draw nigh to us?* Wherefore, I ſay, ſhould theſe Scriptures, and many others of the like Import, ſpeak to us in ſuch a manner, if the Change I have deſcribed, were not attainable in the Uſe of ordinary Means?

Matth. vii. 7.

Luke xi. 13.

Philip. ii. 12.

Jam. iv. 8.

But poſſibly it may be ſaid, can a Man do any thing toward his own *Birth*, or *Creation*, or *Reſurrection*, by all which this Change is deſcribed? To this it is readily anſwered, that we are actually called upon ſo to do. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead, and* CHRIST *ſhall give thee Life.* *Metaphors* are generally made uſe of in Scripture, with ſome *one* conſiderable View; and to give Light in ſome

Eph. v. 14.

ſome particular Matter, for the ſake of which they are produc'd; but it is a manifeſt Wrong to the Deſign of 'em, to ſtretch them to every thing, which a briſk and warm Imagination may ſuggeſt. Suppoſe as to this very Point, that you explain a Man's being *Dead in Sin*, to ſignify his being able to do no more, than a Man *naturally Dead*, is to revive himſelf: When you have done ſo, carry this Explication of the *Metaphor* to another *Text*, and ſee how far it is from being true and agreeable there. Such as are alive to GOD, are ſaid to be *dead to Sin*; which according to the Senſe juſt mentioned, muſt denote, — That ſuch are no more able to do a ſinful Action, than a dead Body is to move or ſtir. And if there are any that will not own this to be a Falſhood, they muſt blot that Text out of the Bible, *There is not a juſt Man upon Earth that doth Good, and ſinneth not:* And at the ſame time, they muſt talk againſt all the Obſervation and Experience in the World. Rom. vi. 2. Eccl. vii. 20.

But dropping all Metaphors, it is farther objected againſt the plain and expreſs Scriptures I have quoted — That our SAVIOUR tells us plainly, whilſt there

are *many* that ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, yet there are *few* that find it.

And again he ſays expreſsly, John vi. 44. *that no Man can come unto him except the Father draw him.* And the Apoſtle tells us, That it is God who *worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his own good Pleaſure.*

To which I think the Anſwer is very obvious. When theſe and the foregoing Places are compared together, they amount evidently to this, and no more: *We* muſt *work*, becauſe God *works in us*, and *with* us; *we* muſt go to Christ by the *Grace* of God *aſſiſting* and *enabling* us; and we muſt *ſtrive* in a believing Expectation of God's accompliſhing our Deſires; becauſe thoſe that have made Attempts, without this Dependance on him, and Help from him, have been diſappointed and baffled. And that leads to a

2d Concluſion, *That for the Succeſs of all Means, and the effecting this happy Change of the new Birth, our Reliance muſt be on* God, *and him alone.*

We muſt make the beſt *Uſe* we can, of all outward Helps and Advantages; but we muſt not *Truſt* to theſe: 'Tis God alone that can give a Principle of new Life; (concerning which I have ſpoken very fully in the Beginning of this Diſcourſe;)

courſe;) and therefore we ſhould take care to fix all our Hope on him. *Grace* is the Gift of GOD, as well as *Glory*; and ſhould be ſought for and eſteemed as a *Gift*, in what way ſoever it may be beſtowed. If any *Means* had been ſufficient of themſelves, to work ſuch a Change in Men, it muſt have been the Preaching and Miracles of JESUS CHRIST, when he was here upon Earth: And yet we find, Thoſe that allow'd him to ſpeak *as never man ſpake*; and were ſenſible that he prov'd his Words, by ſuch *Works as never Man did*, notwithſtanding ſuch Convictions, turned away from him and forſook him. But afterwards, when GOD ſent his SPIRIT to work upon the Hearts of Men, in and with the Preaching of the Goſpel, we read of *Thouſands* converted at a time. Yea thoſe very Adminiſtrations, which Men of Wit and Learning have ſcorn'd and derided, have yet by the mighty Power of GOD, produced ſuch Effects as the wiſeſt and greateſt might be glad to own.

To ſum up all therefore in a little; we are taught to pray, *Turn us, O* LORD! *and then we ſhall be turned, for thou art the* LORD *our* GOD. Lam. v. 21. And the more I am convinced, that this Change is of GOD;

the more earneſtly, and importunately, ſhould I cry unto him that *performeth all things for me.*

Here, Reader! ſtay a while: Review the Heads of what thou haſt been reading; and ſay, if thou canſt, that this Doctrine of the *new Birth* is a Doctrine not to be underſtood. I am very ſenſible indeed, that after all my Care to explain it, in the moſt orderly and affecting manner I could; yet if the *Good Spirit* of God is not pleaſed to give thee a diſcerning Mind, and if he does not *open thine Eyes* to ſee the Evidence and Importance of what has been ſuggeſted to thee, it will be of very little ſervice. But if God does graciouſly concur with theſe Endeavours, He can render them as uſeful to *Thee*, as they have been to ſome *others*: And however inconſiderable they may ſeem in themſelves, this will ſtamp a Value upon them.

" Thus may it pleaſe thee, *O Father of*
" *Lights!* to *enlighten thoſe that ſit in*
" *Darkneſs*, and in the Region of *the*
" *Shadow of Death: Give* them *the*
" *Knowledge of Salvation, for the Remiſ-*
" *ſion of* their *Sins*; and ſo let the *Day-*
" *ſpring from on High viſit* their Souls.

" One

" One Ray from thee, bleſſed GOD! would
" make Day in the moſt benighted Breaſt.
" Be thou, therefore, the Teacher of thoſe
" that are yet ignorant of Thee, and of
" their Way to thee; And bring them
" out of their natural and ſinful *Dark-*
" *neſs*, into thy *marvellous Light*.

CHAP. II.

Wherein 'tis prov'd, that to be Born again, is neceſſary to Salvation.

I Had thought, after the *explaining* of this Change which our SAVIOUR calls our being *Born again*, to have added next the *Means* of attaining it: But when I conſidered, how little agreeable what is advanced would be to the Taſte of the *preſent Age*; and that, in Preaching on this Subject, I had met with a very cold Reception, from ſuch as I was particularly deſirous to have made ſome good Impreſſions upon; it then appeared highly requiſite, immediately to prove the Importance and *Neceſſity* of this Doctrine of the *new Birth*.

And could I now ſpeak with a Voice that ſhould reach the whole World, I would proclaim it, — "That whatever "Nation Men are of, or whatever Par- "ty they belong to, and whatever their "Figure or Characters may be here on "Earth, *Except they be born again, they "ſhall not ſee the Kingdom of* GOD." It is at thy peril, Man! whoever thou art, that heareſt or readeſt theſe Words, if thou dareſt to ſhew a Diſguſt, or even a Diſregard to them. This *Text* ſtands in thy *Bible*, as with a Hand pointing to it; and a double Seal [*verily, verily*] ſet upon it; that declares it one of the *unalterable Edicts* of Heaven. Let the *Profaneneſs* of the World, or the *vain Religion* of the World, ſuggeſt what they will, if thou art not *Born again*, thou art not in a *State of Salvation.*

Our SAVIOUR's Words are very poſitive, and they are very plain too.

Seeing and *Enjoying* GOD, *ſeeing* and *entering into* his Kingdom, are in Scripture Language the ſame thing: And the *Kingdom of* GOD, you know, is frequently to be underſtood of the *Goſpel State*, or the Kingdom of Grace; and alſo of the *Heavenly State*, or the Kingdom of Glory. So that the full Meaning of our LORD's Aſſertion muſt be this; —*Except a Man*

Man be born again, he cannot be accounted a *true Chriſtian* in *this World*, — nor be admitted into the *Society* of the *bleſſed Spirits above.*

Theſe two Things, I ſhall ſet my ſelf diſtinctly to prove. O that I might hope for ſuch Succeſs in this Attempt, as that none, who read or hear what I have to ſay, might deceive themſelves with a *falſe Name*, or a *falſe Hope*; that is, calling themſelves *Chriſtians*, or expecting the *Happineſs* of ſuch, whilſt they are Strangers to this *new Birth!*

I. I ſhall eſtabliſh the Truth of this Aſſertion,— *That no Man can be a real Chriſtian, except he be thus changed and renewed.* For,

1. Without this, there cannot be an *accepting of* JESUS CHRIST, as our *Teacher* and *Inſtructor.*

'Tis Mockery to call him our *Maſter*, or *Leader*, if we are not willing to be *taught* by him. And 'tis in vain that we profeſs to receive *ſome things* from him, if we do not ſubſcribe to the *whole* of his Inſtructions and Revelations. Now then, conſider it,— our SAVIOUR inſiſts upon this as the *firſt* thing to be learnt and under-

underſtood by *Nicodemus*, when he addreſs'd him as a *Teacher* come from GOD. It is a matter of ſuch Importance, in our profeſſing Chriſtianity, to be *born again*, that 'tis neceſſary to prepare us for the Reception of *all the other* Doctrines of the Goſpel. If the natural Pride, Senſuality, and Hardneſs of our Hearts be not removed, we ſhall never be brought to a right underſtanding of the Method of Salvation by a Redeemer; nor to a due Submiſſion to the Diſpoſals of Providence; nor indeed to any regular Subjection to the *Father of Spirits*, ſo as to have a juſt and prevailing Senſe of our Obligations to him. However, therefore, Men may compliment CHRIST, by calling him MASTER and LORD; or rather think to do honour to *themſelves*, by profeſſing to be his *Followers* and *Diſciples*; yet in truth and reality they *reject* him, when they diſregard a Doctrine that He has made the leading and principal one in his Religion. What is this, but in effect to make void the *whole Goſpel*; and to weaken the Force of every *other* Doctrine, ſo as to hinder its proper Influence upon us?

To this, undoubtedly to this, is owing the Unſucceſsfulneſs of Preaching in a great meaſure, at this day. Tho' the other

other Doctrines of the Goſpel may be ſet in the cleareſt Light; tho' Holineſs, in its ſeveral Branches, may be preſs'd with great Warmth and Seriouſneſs, and with thoſe Arguments that one would think irreſiſtible; yet we find, that the Knowledge of Men, and their ſtrongeſt Convictions, in many caſes ſerve only to *condemn*, not to ſanctify or *reform* them. How many are there, who can readily rehearſe the ſeveral Articles of their *Creed*; and are convinced, it is their Duty to obſerve GOD's *Commandments*; who, for all this, live and act juſt as Men would do, that believed and acknowledged no ſuch things? Whereas if Men were thoroughly inſtructed concerning the *Neceſſity* of their being born again; and were taught to conceive aright of a Principle of new Life being derived from above; and would be perſuaded, in the firſt and chief place, to ſeek for the renewing converting Influences of the bleſſed SPIRIT; all other Matters, both of Faith and Practice, would then become intelligible, affecting, and eaſy: And the whole Scheme of Chriſtianity would appear a quite different thing, to what 'tis generally eſteem'd. But without this, we cannot be ſaid to receive CHRIST as our *Prophet* and *Teacher*: And therefore in vain call our ſelves

ſelves by his Name, or pretend to be his Diſciples.

2. *Except a Man be born again*, he cannot be intereſted in the *Death* of CHRIST, as making *Atonement and Satisfaction for him.*

We are told, that for this End CHRIST both *died and roſe again* — that he might be a PATTERN to us of *dying to Sin, and being made alive unto* GOD: Or according to another way of Expreſſion, that our *old Man might be crucified with him*; and that we might be *raiſed with him, to walk in newneſs of Life.* But now, this *Deſign* of our SAVIOUR's Death is *loſt*, if we be not in ſuch a ſenſe conformed to him.

Rom. vi. 10, 11.

Rom. vi. 4. *and* 6. *compared.*

Yea if we conſider his Death as a PROPITIATION *for Sin*, it will be unavailable to our Souls, except we are thus renewed. According to that common Diſtinction, CHRIST died to ſave us *from* our Sins, not *in* them. And his Death, *without* us, will not avail us, if there be not alſo this Work of the SPIRIT *within* us. 'Tis not enough, that *Satisfaction* is made for Sin; if we are not alſo delivered by Almighty Grace from the *reigning Power* of

of it. What would it ſignify to a condemn'd Criminal, to have a Pardon procur'd for him, if at the ſame time he was ſick of a *mortal Diſtemper?* Except his Diſeaſe be healed, as well as the Sentence of Death taken away, 'tis in vain to promiſe him Life. So, notwithſtanding the Purchaſe of Pardon by JESUS CHRIST, if the Diſtemper of which we are a-dying be not alſo removed, we are undone for ever. Let the Value of a REDEEMER's Blood be never ſo great, in the ſight of God; yet, if it is not apply'd for healing and cleanſing unto us, we ſhall be never the better for it. And therefore, except we are *Born again* CHRIST cannot be a *Saviour* to us. However we may now be *called* by *his Name*, yet hereafter he will profeſs unto all that are unregenerate, *I never knew you.*

3. *No Man can acknowledge the Sovereignty and Dominion of* CHRIST, *as the Goſpel requires, unleſs ſuch a Change be wrought in him:* And without this no Man can be a *real Chriſtian.*

It is by this means, that our LORD has appointed Subjects to be gathered, and Members to be admitted into his Kingdom. Hence it is, that thoſe who belong to him, are ſaid to be *called and choſen*

Col. iii. 3, 4. *ſen out of the World*, and to have *a Life hid with* CHRIST in GOD; and ſo *when* CHRIST, *who is their Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall they alſo appear with him in Glory.* It is by being *born again*, that the Throne of a REDEEMER is fix'd in the Hearts of Men: And by this alone they are brought into a perfect Subjection to his Method of ruling them. *His Kingdom is not of this World*; nor his manner of governing ſuited to the Forms of Government here. It is an Argument of very great Ignorance, or ſomething worſe, for Men to account themſelves, or pretend to make others, the Subjects of CHRIST's Kingdom, merely becauſe of their outward Conformity to the Inſtitutions of his Worſhip, and their complying with a particular Form of Church Government. Nothing leſs than a thorough Change, and Renovation of the Heart and Mind, can tranſlate a Man from the Kingdom and Power of *Satan*, to the Kingdom of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

On this account, as well as others before mentioned, our SAVIOUR might juſtly reproach *Nicodemus*; That he ſhould be a *Ruler* in *Iſrael*, and yet appear ſo inſenſible of the vaſt *Change* it muſt make in a Man to paſs from *one Kingdom* and *Govern-*

Government to another. Whenever any Stranger came to ſettle amongſt the *Jews*, the Alteration both of his *Maxims* and *Manners* was *ſo* great, that one would have expected, *Nicodemus* ſhould readily conceive of the Alteration that muſt be made in ſuch as became the Subjects of CHRIST's Kingdom: Which being a *ſpiritual Kingdom*, muſt needs differ exceedingly from all the Kingdoms of *this World*; and ſo muſt require a very different Spirit and turn of Mind, in thoſe that are called to act in it.

In the Goſpel Scheme of Government, there are ſo many things not only above *natural* Reaſon, but *contrary* to the Dictates of *corrupt* Reaſon, that a Principle of ſpiritual divine Life muſt neceſſarily gain the Aſcendency, before ſuch Rules of Conduct and Behaviour can be duly obſerved. For Example; we are requir'd to prefer the Intereſt of a REDEEMER, and his Religion in the World, above all our *Enjoyments and Relations*; yea, above *Life* it ſelf. We are therefore farther required to be *patient* under *Sufferings* and *Afflictions*; to be *watchful and conſtant* in our *Devotions*; to *forgive* our *Enemies*; to endeavour after

Luke xiv. 26.

Luke xxi. 19. *with the Context.*

1 Pet. iv. 7.

Matth. v. 44.

their

Rom. xii. 20. Gal. vi. 10.

their *Converſion* and *Reformation*; and to *relieve*, as we have Ability and Opportunity, the *Neceſſity* of the *Poor*. Now let us, by theſe and ſuch like things, try how far any Perſon in a *natural corrupt State* is like to be obedient to CHRIST, and to live in ſubjection to him; and we ſhall ſoon find, that theſe are things ſo contrary to us, as not to be comply'd with till we are *born again*. We are naturally fond of Life, and the outward Comforts of it; apt to fret at every thing that is troubleſome and painful to us; averſe to Prayer, Hearing, Reading, and the Exerciſes of Religion; full of Reſentment againſt ſuch as offend us; and ready to deſpiſe and turn away from thoſe that are in mean and diſtreſſed Circumſtances: So that except we are *changed*, and made *new Creatures*, we ſhall never ſubmit to ſuch Rules of Conduct as theſe are.

Put all together, and then aſk your ſelves; Can that Man be a *Chriſtian*, that neither learns of CHRIST as a *Teacher*; nor is intereſted in him as a *Saviour*; nor can be ſubject to him as a *King*? I wonder Men are not aſhamed of the Falſhood of thoſe Pretenſions, that are ſo apparently different from their real Characters: Or that any Man can ſatisfy himſelf with a

Pro-

Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, who has no regard to the *Import* of ſuch a Profeſſion, and the Obligations under which it lays him.

But the *formal Chriſtian* will ſay, Do not I perform the *Duties* of Religion, and attend upon the *Worſhip of* GOD, according to the Direction of the Goſpel? yea, do I not comply with that *peculiar Inſtitution* of a crucify'd SAVIOUR, to eat and drink at a *Communion-Table?* Which many, concerning whom we may hope well, do not yet go ſo far as to do: And can I, after all this, be thought unworthy of the Name of a *Chriſtian?*

To ſuch I anſwer; that you have indeed a Claim to the ſacred *Name*, and to all the *outward Privileges* of Chriſtians; and you are look'd upon as ſuch by us: But at the ſame time, you may appear quite otherwiſe in the Eſteem and Account of Almighty GOD.

The outward Performance of religious Duties, however it may entitle us to the good Opinion of Men, yet cannot avail us in the ſight of GOD, if there be not ſuch an *Attention*, ſuch an *Affection*, and ſuch a *Steadineſs* and *Perſeverance*, as the Goſpel requires: In all which, the Ser-

vices

vices of thoſe Men will be found faulty, who are Strangers to the *new Birth*.

The natural Man who is deſtitute of a Principle of divine Life, has no ſuch Concern about the *Spirituality* of his Worſhip, and the *Fixedneſs* of his *Heart* in religious Exerciſes; as the Man that is ſavingly chang'd, and renew'd, is acted by. An external Devotion is what ſuch a one contents himſelf with, altho' it goes no farther than a *Lip-Service*, or a *Bodily Exerciſe*.

Iſa. xxix. 13.

Hence it comes to paſs, that the Spirit is *cold* and *unaffected*; and knows nothing of that Fervour, and exceeding Pleaſure, which the real Chriſtian is frequently tranſported with. Have I not ſeen two Perſons joining in the ſame Prayer, or hearing the ſame Sermon, yet as diſtant in the Frame of their Minds, as Heaven and Earth? One trifling, and rambling with his Eyes and his Thoughts, after a thouſand Vanities; when he that has been next him, has thought himſelf at the very Gate of Heaven? One ſleeping, a *ſecond* ſetting himſelf againſt what is ſaid; when another, in the ſame Seat, has been eagerly catching every Word that has been ſpoken; and has thought that what he heard, was enough to command his Attention for ever?

Such

Such is the Difference converting Grace makes.

Farther; he that is in an unregenerate State, is ſoon *weary* of every good Work. He is glad of Excuſes to put by, or make ſhort, every Exerciſe of a religious nature: And is ready, upon any preſſing Occaſion, to throw off all. *Will the Hypocrite always call upon* GOD? If it be for his Gain, or Preferment, or if it appear neceſſary for the ſecuring what he has, he can wholly *lay aſide* his Thoughts of Religion: Or, in the moſt material Points, can *alter* them. He is ready to do either, as the Times and his Circumſtances require. Whereas the real Chriſtian is one that is *ſtedfaſt*, and *unmoveable*; *always abounding in the Work of the* LORD. He that is *born again*, is endued with a Principle, that will carry him thro' all Tryals; and render him ſuperior to all Oppoſitions; and enable him to conquer all Temptations; (I mean, as to the final Iſſue of them;) which can be ſaid of no other Man.

Job xxvii. 10.

1 Cor. xv. 58.

Since, therefore, Men may attend upon *Sacraments*, as well as other Parts of religious Worſhip, without a becoming Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind; theſe

are only to be look'd upon, as external *Badges* of Chriſtianity, not as certain *Evidences* of it. And from our own Obſervation we are aſſured, — that Sacramental Vows and Promiſes are very little minded, in the *making*, and much leſs in the *keeping* of them, by ſome that frequent thoſe Solemnities. Or if, at ſuch times, there may be ſomething of a more than ordinary Seriouſneſs; yet, by one Temptation or other, we very often ſee thoſe ſacred Bonds broken; and Perſons give themſelves a looſe to act, as if they had never come under ſuch Obligations.

So that upon the whole, it can be no Breach of Charity to ſay, that many are enroll'd among the Numbers of Communicants, whoſe *Names are not written in the Book of Life.* And therefore, there is a great deal of difference betwixt a Man's being allow'd to paſs for a Chriſtian, *now*; and his being found really ſuch, *at laſt*; without which, he cannot be admitted into Heaven.

But before I ſet my ſelf to enlarge on that, it is very fit to add; That even *at preſent*, the diſtinguiſhing Privileges and Bleſſings of the *real* Chriſtian are ſuch, as theſe *nominal* Chriſtians intermeddle not with: It may be ſaid concerning them, with reference to theſe *Privileges*, that

that they have *neither Part nor Lot in the Matter.*

The grand Bleſſing of the Goſpel is, *Peace* with GOD: But it is impoſſible to obtain this, if we are not made *new Creatures.* The Favour of GOD is indeed the *Purchaſe* of CHRIST; but it is what none ſhall be intereſted in, that are not *prepared* for it. He will never preſent any to the Father, as Objects of his ſpecial Love, till they are fit to be preſented to him. We muſt be reſtored to the *Likeneſs* of the Deity, or we can never be reſtored to his complacential *Love.* Hence it is that the *new Birth*, by which we are *created again in the Image of* GOD, becomes neceſſary to our being qualified for the Marks of his ſpecial Favour.

Another very high Privilege of the Goſpel, is our *Union* and *Communion* with CHRIST. We are made *one with him*, and derive all our Supplies from him: Which cannot poſſibly be, except the *ſame Mind be in us, which was alſo in* CHRIST JESUS. All the Members of his *Body* muſt, in ſome meaſure, be conformed to their *Head:* Unleſs we ſhould ſuppoſe, that this myſtical Body is like the *Image* of *Nebuchadnezzar*; the Head *Gold*, but the Feet *Iron* and *Clay.* And then what muſt become of ſuch a Text as that, *Be ye holy, for I*

am holy? Or where would be the juſt reaſoning of that other Place, *What Communion hath Light with Darkneſs? and what Concord hath* CHRIST *with* Belial? 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

Farther; we cannot have *Peace* in our own *Conſciences*, nor obtain a ſettled compoſed Temper of Mind, without ſuch a Change. This is neceſſary to remove our Confuſions, our Guilt, our Fears, and our reigning Corruptions.

And then again; thoſe *Joys* and Conſolations that proceed from the good SPIRIT of GOD, are only to be expected as conſequent upon his *renewing* Influences and Operations. Where he is not a *converting*, he will not be a *comforting* Spirit.

Now let him, that readeth, underſtand: And if he does ſo, I am perſuaded, he muſt be convinced, that no Man can be a *real Chriſtian*, except he be *born again*. Without this, he cannot perform the Duties of Religion aright; nor can he be intereſted in the peculiar and moſt deſirable Privileges of Chriſtianity: And therefore whatever he may ſeem to *be*, or to *do*, in the Eye of the World; he neither *is*, nor *does* what GOD requires and expects from him. So that however he may paſs for a Chriſtian at *preſent*, he ſhall not be admitted

mitted to the Happineſs of ſuch at *laſt*. This I am now to inſiſt on, by ſhewing,

II. *That no Man ſhall enter into the Kingdom of* GOD *above, or dwell in his glorious Preſence in Heaven, unleſs he be born again.*

And here let me afreſh ſummon the Attention, of him that hears, or reads. If what has been ſaid already, has made no ſuitable Impreſſions; yet ſomething may now poſſibly be offer'd, that ſhall find a *nearer* and *quicker* way to thy Heart.

May I not ſuppoſe it is a pleaſure to thee, to hear of Heaven? And that thou art, ſometimes, ready to *talk* of it too? Nay, is not the *Hope of being ſaved*, become a familiar Expreſſion in all parts of thy Converſation? What, if after all the pleaſing Things thou haſt heard of that bliſsful Place, and all thy preſumptuous Hope of arriving at it, thou ſhould'ſt never come there? Canſt thou bear ſuch a Thought, without being ſtartled and concern'd? Well, I am now in plain Terms to aſſure thee, that except thou art *renewed* and *born again*, thou ſhalt *never enter into Heaven.*

1. Thy LORD and SAVIOUR *has moſt expreſly declared this, and his Faithfulneſs ſtands engaged to make it good.*

Beſides the *Text* I am upon, and the Repetition of the ſame thing a little after; it is made as indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Salvation, in other Places of Scripture, as in theſe. Matth. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And again, Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of refreſhing ſhall come from the Preſence of the* LORD. And in *Heb.* xii. 14. we are told, that *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the* LORD; that is, Holineſs of *Nature*, which is productive of Holineſs in the *Life*. Once more, *Rev.* xxi. 5. He *that ſate upon the Throne*, is repreſented as ſaying, *Behold, I make all Things new:* Upon this it is, that thoſe who have *overcome*, are made *to inherit all Things*; even as thus *renewed:* But without this, it is abſolutely determin'd in the *laſt Verſe* of that *Chapter, there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it* (the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*) *any thing that defileth.*

Now can it be expected that, after all this, GOD ſhould not keep to his Word?

If

If ſuch Declarations as theſe be looked upon as falſe, the Promiſe of Happineſs join'd with them muſt be falſe too.

They are wretched Miſtakes, which, on both hands, Men run into; when they think, that an infinitely holy unchangeable GOD will deal, either more *mercifully*, or more *ſeverely*, with them, than he has ſpoken in his Word. Yet ſo it is; that, whilſt ſome of timorous and melancholy Diſpoſitions, can hardly be perſuaded to believe, GOD will be ſo *gracious* and *merciful* as the Scriptures repreſent him; there are others of more ſanguine Tempers, that are ready to conclude, GOD will not condemn them to endleſs Miſery, altho' they live in thoſe Sins, againſt which, *everlaſting Deſtruction* from the Preſence of the LORD is moſt expreſly denounced. Thus Men are ready to judge of the great GOD, by *themſelves*; and becauſe they do not ſo carefully obſerve their *friendly Promiſes*, nor ſo fully execute their *haſty Threatnings*, as to make them good without varying from them, therefore they conclude, it is thus with GOD.

Whereas the very Foundation, and Principle of all Religion, is the TRUTH of GOD. For if it could be ſuppoſed, that GOD dealt *deceitfully* with his Creatures, or that he would *vary* from the

ſettled Rules of his Government and Proceedure, ſo as to become either *better* or *worſe* than his Word; he would no longer be a proper Object of that Honour, and Truſt, and Obedience, which he requires of us. Whereſoever therefore, any thing is expreſly inſiſted on as a *Term of Salvation*, there can be no diſpenſing with it; no Admiſſion into Heaven *without it*; nor will any thing, of our contriving, be accepted in the *room* of it.

It is not what way *I would preſcribe*, if I was to chuſe the Method of obtaining eternal Life; but the way ſettled and appointed by GOD, that every Man ought to ſtudy, and with which he muſt entirely comply. Let Men lay what Schemes of Salvation they pleaſe; let them inſiſt upon the common Forms of Worſhip, or a Heat and Zeal for a particular Party, as the way to Heaven: Or let them contrive, in ſome *ſingular* and reſerved way of *their own*, to give up themſelves to GOD; yet if no real thorough Change be made in their Souls, they are ſtill to ſeek for the true way of Salvation. It is the expreſs Declaration of our LORD, and all the Powers on Earth ſhall never be able to alter his Meaſures and Proceedings, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of* GOD. If it was becom-

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ing the Divine Goodneſs and Perfection, to make ſuch a Declaration; infinite Truth, and Juſtice, require it ſhould be *made good.* GOD will not act inconſiſtently with his Word to ſave any. But conſider farther;

2. *It is wholly diſagreeable to the Purity and Holineſs of* GOD (as well as his Faithfulneſs and Unchangeableneſs) *to admit ſuch into his Preſence and Favour, as are unſanctify'd and unrenewed.*

The *Scripture* has deſcribed the *Abhorrence* which there is to *Sin*, in the *Divine Nature*, by things that are to us moſt loathſome and deteſtable. A Creature *lying in its Blood*, and in a State of Putrefaction, is not more ſhocking and offenſive to *us*; than one that *lies in Sin*, is to GOD. Yea, *Death* itſelf, which to our Nature is the moſt terrible of all things, cannot be more *our* Averſion, than *Sin* is the Averſion of a holy GOD. Thoſe who live wickedly are therefore ſaid to be *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins.* By theſe Repreſentations, we may form ſome Notions of Sin's Contradiction to the Divine Nature; and thence we muſt conlude, the Neceſſity of its being taken away, before

Ezek. xvi. 6.

Epheſ. ii. 1.

fore we can be admitted into the favourable Preſence of GOD.

Farther; we read, of GOD's *hating the Workers of Iniquity*, and of his being *angry with the Wicked every day:* Which are Expreſſions that undoubtedly intimate, his being as effectually turn'd away from, or ſet againſt impenitent unrenewed Sinners, as we are againſt thoſe things that are the Objects of our Hatred, or deſerve our Anger. For, though we are by no means to think, there are ſuch Paſſions as theſe in Almighty GOD; yet we may conceive of his dealing with the Wicked, by a wiſe and prudent Magiſtrate's dealing with thoſe, that have done all that ever they could to injure his Authority, and to bring the Laws into contempt.

But, that I may give you the clearer Notion of GOD's abhorring and rejecting the *Workers of Iniquity*, you may take the account of their Caſe, in ſhort, thus.—— 'Man being, at firſt, made up of two 'different Natures, *Fleſh*, and *Spirit*; the 'Laws of his Creation moſt certainly ob-'lig'd him, to have been *govern*'d by the 'Dictates of that Nature, which was the '*nobleſt* and moſt *excellent:* This, his *Ma-'ker* requir'd: This, *in reaſon*, one would 'have expected. However, ſuch was 'Man's Sin and Folly, that it proved

'quite

'quite otherwiſe. He was ſoon drawn 'away to gratify his *Senſes*, whilſt he 'diſgraced his *better Powers*. Hereupon, 'his Maker being juſtly diſpleaſed, ap-'pointed the *Separation* of that Soul and 'Body, by *Death*, which acted ſo *ill* 'when *united*. Nevertheleſs, after he had '*appointed it unto Men once to die*, he con-'trived a farther way for recovering the '*Soul* out of this unhappy *Subjection* to 'ſenſible and corruptible things: And 'promis'd upon ſuch a Reſtoration of 'the *Soul*, to reſtore that *Happineſs* Man 'had *loſt*, by raiſing him to a heaven-'ly *Paradiſe*.' Now, if notwithſtanding ſuch Grace as this, Men will ſtill prefer the *Animal* Life above the *Spiritual*; what can they expect, but that their throwing ſuch an aggravated Contempt upon the *Father* of *Spirits*, and the *Spiritual Happineſs* he propoſes, ſhould end in their Baniſhment from *both?* Yea, how can it be otherwiſe, whilſt they are purſuing thoſe things which carry them ſtill farther and farther from the Divine Being, but that at laſt they ſhould be remov'd to an eternal Diſtance from that GOD, to whom they have made themſelves *utterly diſagreeable?* And it will follow from hence, that,

3. *The unrenewed Mind is as much ſet againſt the Happineſs of Heaven,* as *the great* GOD *is ſet againſt the Admiſſion of ſuch a one into it.* So that if we could conceive an unregenerate Perſon to be actually gotten into the Preſence of GOD above, it would be no Happineſs to him to be there.

Can two walk together, ſays the *Prophet, except they be agreed?* Would it be any Pleaſure for two Perſons to *live* continually *together,* whoſe Inclinations, Wills, and Diſpoſitions are *oppoſite* and *croſs to each other?* Would there not be an earneſt Deſire of more ſuitable Company and Society? What Pleaſure then can a Man, that is ſet upon things *ſenſible* and *ſinful,* have in the Preſence of that Being, whoſe Nature, and Will, and Bleſſedneſs are intirely *ſpiritual* and *holy?*

Either GOD, or the *Sinner,* muſt be *changed,* before there can be any *Agreement* between them: And till there is a Conformity, and an Agreeableneſs, there can be no Happineſs. Without this, to ſpend an Eternity together, would be a moſt undeſirable thing. Now, can the Sinner be ſo fooliſh and blaſphemous as to imagine, that GOD ſhould ceaſe to be infinitely perfect and holy? or that he

ſhould

ſhould become *ſuch a one as himſelf?* Common Senſe, one would think, could not fail of directing him rather to conclude, that the Change muſt be in his *own Soul*; and that *his* Will muſt be brought to the Will of the LORD, and *his* Nature conformed to the *divine* Nature, in order to his dwelling in the bliſsful Preſence of GOD.

An unrenewed Mind is no way ſuitable either to the *Company*, the *Employments*, or the *Entertainments* of Heaven.

The *Company* of thoſe that inhabit the World above, muſt needs be diſagreeable to an unholy Soul. For, ſince GOD himſelf is ſo (as we have juſt been arguing) all thoſe that are conformed to him, and whoſe Felicity conſiſts in the Enjoyment of him, muſt conſequently be diſagreeable too. JESUS CHRIST is the *expreſs Image* of the Father, in Holineſs, as well as other Perfections; and as it was his Character on Earth, it is his Glory in Heaven, to be *ſeparate* from Sinners. Holy *Angels*, even in their Appearance to *good Men* here below, have filled them with Confuſion and Dread; and how then ſhall the whole Hoſt of Heaven, in all their Splendor and Purity, be endured by ſinful Men? The *Spirits of juſt Men*, that are perfected above, are ſuch as the Sinner

hated, ſcorn'd, perſecuted, or liv'd in a conſtant diſlike to, in this World; and can they then be happy together in another World, when the Difference between 'em is greatned, by the *conſummate* Holineſs of the one, and the *increaſed* Prejudices of the other? Their *dying* in a State of Enmity, has made that Enmity an *unalterable* thing. Lay all this together, and if an unholy Perſon would not find one Companion like himſelf in Heaven, think, what Pleaſure he could have in the Society of the Bleſſed, ſuppoſing it were poſſible for him to get among them.

Again; the *Employments* of Heaven, would not ſuit the Temper and Inclinations of ſuch a one, any more than the Company. *Contemplation* of the Things of GOD and Religion, is what he has never inur'd himſelf to; his Temper has been too much ſet againſt *ſerious Conſideration*, ever to take pleaſure in ſuch an Exerciſe. And the Services of *Angels*, who are always *fulfilling the Pleaſure* of their LORD, would go quite againſt the grain of the Sinner's Inclinations; who has been us'd to ſeek *his own Pleaſure*, and to conſult *his own Will*, in all his Actions. Inſtead of praying, that *the Will of* GOD might be *done on Earth as it*

it is in Heaven, he would wiſh the quite contrary; that there might be *no other* doing of the Will of GOD in *Heaven*, than what he had been *us'd to here on Earth*; that is, not to regard it at all. Yea, farther, the very *Praiſes* and *Triumphs* of Heaven would be unſuitable to an unrenewed Mind. Such a one could by no means bear a Part in that ſolemn Acclamation, *Holy, Holy, Holy* LORD GOD *Almighty*; ſince he had no admiring Thoughts of GOD's Holineſs. Nor could he ever join in that *Song of the Lamb*, —— Glory to him that hath *loved us* and *waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood*, ſo long as he remained unſanctified and unrenewed. Such *Employments* as theſe, could afford no pleaſure to a wicked Man.

Hence it neceſſarily follows, that the *Entertainments* and *Joys* of Heaven, would by no means anſwer the Wiſhes and Deſires of an unregenerate Soul, though plac'd in the midſt of them. The ſubſtantial Happineſs of the heavenly Inhabitants conſiſts in the *Knowledge* and *Love* of GOD: But I need not ſay more to prove that an unrenewed Soul is incapable of this; I ſhall only add, that by this *Incapacity*, ſuch a one muſt needs ſuffer the eternal Loſs of all thoſe Joys, which ariſe from a *beholding* the unveiled

Glories

Glories of the Deity; and alſo of all thoſe which are wrapt up in that high Satisfaction that reſults from the *loving*, and *knowing* we are *beloved* by the greateſt and beſt Being in the Univerſe. At the ſame time, the unholy Soul is a perfect Stranger to all thoſe Tranſports, that are owing to a Review of the *Methods* of *converting Grace*; and can taſte nothing of the Bliſs, that ſprings from a *ſacred indiſſoluble Friendſhip* with *holy intelligent Spirits*. And, upon the Reaſons already alledged, the ſame might be ſaid of every other Joy of Heaven.

But now, let me engage you ſeriouſly to attend to the Concluſion of the whole Matter. And there is one Truth, which I apprehend will appear with great Evidence, after what has been ſaid; namely, *That a great deal more is neceſſary, than is commonly imagined, to reconcile you to the Heaven and Happineſs of Chriſtians.* There is not only a Difficulty, in bringing Men to the Goſpel Terms of obtaining Happineſs; but even in reconciling them to the Happineſs itſelf. The Chriſtian's Heaven is not a *Mahomet's Paradiſe*, a Place of ſenſual Delights and Enjoyments; but it is a *ſpiritual* Felicity, and ſuch only as can be enjoy'd by pure intellectual Beings.

That

That Man, therefore, talks of he knows not what, that can talk of going to Heaven, whilſt his Buſineſs, or Pleaſures, or Poſſeſſions here, engroſs his Thoughts and Affections. Thou muſt have Reliſhes of a very different nature from thoſe of the Senſualiſt and the Worldling, before thou canſt be happy with GOD, and the glorified *Spirits* above.

If then, thou haſt ever made it thy Wiſh *to die the Death of the Righteous*; remember, that now thou art told, thou muſt in thy Life-time *become Righteous*, by being thus *renewed* and *Born again*, or that Wiſh will avail thee nothing. But whether thou art convinc'd of this or not, I muſt, for the preſent, ceaſe arguing with thee, and cloſe this Chapter: Which I ſhall do, with theſe two *Inferences* from what has been ſaid.

1. We may infer, *There are but few that ſhall be ſaved.*

If ſuch *Spirituality* be neceſſary to prepare Men for *Heaven*; we may conclude, without any thing of an uncharitable cenſorious Temper, that very *few* are *going thither*. Thus much, our LORD told his Diſciples in *his Day*; and this, we have abundant reaſon to apply alſo to our *own Day*.

Take

Take an Account of thoſe that live in Atheiſm and Unbelief; and that will not acknowledge, or ſerve God at all:

Then compute the Number of thoſe that worſhip God vainly, in an idolatrous ſuperſtitious manner, and reſting in their bodily Worſhip and Devotion:

After that, look over the Crew of common profane Swearers, and Blaſphemers of the Name of God:

Reckon up all thoſe that live in the ſtated Profanation of the Lord's Day:

Add to theſe, a Liſt of ſuch as are guilty of a reſolute Diſobedience to Parents, or Maſters, or lawful Governors:

Tell over the Numbers of thoſe that are notorious for Drunkenneſs, Intemperance, or for Revenge and deſtructive Paſſions, whereby they ſhorten their own Lives, or take away the Lives of others:

Set down all thoſe, that are infamous for Adultery, or Fornication, or other habitual Uncleanneſs:

Go on to thoſe, that thrive by unjuſt Means, ſuch as Robbery, Frauds and Oppreſſion:

Survey the Crowd of thoſe, that are given up to a Spirit of Lying and Falſhood; and that, even in their ſolemn Oaths, and bearing Witneſs in Courts of Judicature:

And

And once more find out the reſtleſs Tribe of thoſe that are Vagrants from the Stations, in which GOD had placed them in the World; or that are coveting a deal of it, and never ſatisfied with the Allotments of Providence:

And when you have joined all theſe together, the Number of ſuch as are renewed and ſanctified, will be found comparatively very ſmall. And that you may not be afraid to ſet down any, as Unregenerate, who live in one or more of the aforementioned Sins, take that Text in the 1 Epiſt. *John* iii. 9. along with you in your Computation; *Whoſoever is born of* GOD, *doth not commit Sin*; that is, ſo as to love it, and live in it: And then, wherever you ſee a Perſon that does habitually commit Sin, and continue in it, you may without ſcruple place him amongſt thoſe that are *not Born* of GOD.

But then, beſides ſuch as live in notorious Wickedneſs, you are to take in all ſuch as reſt in an *outward Appearance* of Religion, whilſt they are Strangers to the *ſpiritual divine Life*, and the *nobleſt* Exerciſes of it: Such as take up a Profeſſion, *merely* from their *Education*, or from *external Motives* and Inducements; and owe all their Reſtraints from Sin, to theſe: And ſuch as have once made a

ſtricter

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ſtricter Profeſſion, but *degenerate* and fall from it: And, after all theſe are added to the forementioned Numbers of Tranſgreſſors, how few ſhall we meet with that are ſavingly renewed?

In your Computations of this kind, you are directed by that of our SAVIOUR, in the viith of *Matth.* the *latter End: Not every one that ſaith*, LORD, LORD! *but he that doth the Will of my Father*, &c.

The Deſign of all this, is not to diſcourage Men's Attempts, but to put 'em upon contending with the greater Earneſtneſs; and ſhewing a more ardent Deſire of being found among the *few that ſhall be ſaved.* We muſt not only *ſeek*, but *ſtrive, to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*; and that for this very Reaſon, *becauſe many* ſhall ſeek *to enter in* (by an outward Profeſſion, or ſome faint Endeavours) *that ſhall not be able*, Luke xiii. 21.

2. From what has been ſaid, we ſhould learn to *pity thoſe, that are heated with a miſtaken Zeal in the leſſer Points of Religion, whilſt this greateſt and weightieſt Doctrine of Chriſtianity is neglected.*

Never was there more reaſon for the Exerciſe of ſuch a Compaſſion, than in the preſent Age; when *Party-Zeal* is rais'd to ſuch a height, and *true Piety* ſunk ſo low.

low. Are there not many, who would now be thought the only *Prophets* of the LORD, that lay more ſtreſs upon outward Forms and Ceremonies, than upon Faith and Repentance? and make more to depend upon their *own way* of adminiſtring *Baptiſm*, and the LORD's *Supper*, than upon thoſe *Qualifications* without which NO Adminiſtration of theſe Sacraments can be available? Nay, are there not thoſe who have laid the whole Streſs of our Acceptance with GOD, upon a *Point* of *Civil Government?* As if it was of more Importance to embrace a Set of Notions of that kind, than to obſerve ſuch a Doctrine as this I am upon, which our SAVIOUR thought fit to prefer to all others.

What *Political* and *State Orations* have of late been the weekly Entertainment of our moſt *ſolemn* Aſſemblies? yea, what trifling and *Childiſh Harangues* have ſome of the *greateſt Audiences* in this *City*, and *Nation*, been amus'd with? *Converſion* and *Sanctification* have been ſlighted; and Contempt thrown upon *thoſe*, who were moſt in earneſt in recommending theſe Things. By ſome, they have not been *believed*, nor by others *underſtood*, and by very few *inſiſted on*, as they ought to be. And ſhall we not pity thoſe, who are going

going on confidently in an Opinion of themſelves, upon ſome *outward Advantages*; when, at the ſame time they are Strangers to the *true* and *only* way to Heaven? Alas, Man! thy crying up the *Church*, and being of this or the other *Party* in it, will not ſtand thee in ſtead at the Bar of GOD, if thou knoweſt not what it is to be *Born again*.

Thou mayſt deſpiſe this way of Preaching, and Writing, if thou pleaſeſt; only know this, that in ſo doing thou doſt not deſpiſe *Man*, but GOD. All the *Texts* I have quoted, muſt be blotted out of the *Bible*, before thou canſt juſtify ſuch a Contempt. Thou muſt find out ſome *other Heaven*, inſtead of that I have been deſcribing; and take up ſome *other Name*, inſtead of that of a *Chriſtian*; before thou canſt ſet aſide the Doctrine of *Regeneration*.

So that every wiſe and good Man may well lay it to heart, that a Work of this nature is ſo much at a ſtand. And whatever others do, let you and I make it our conſtant Requeſt to GOD, that he would *revive this Work in the midſt of the Years*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Means *of attaining the new Birth.*

HAving ſhewn wherein the being *Born again* does *conſiſt*; as alſo the *Neceſſity* of it, if we would *ſee the Kingdom of* GOD; (that is, if we would be either *real Chriſtians* in this World, or *glorified Spirits* in another;) I would now ſuppoſe the Language, of ſome convinced Sinner, to be ſuch as this: "O tell me, what Courſe I ſhall "take to get out of my ſinful State, and "to get an Intereſt in the renewing "ſanctifying Grace of GOD! *What ſhall* "*I do to be ſaved?* And in order to that, "what ſhall I do that I may be *born a-* "*gain?*"

If this be the unfeigned Diſpoſition of your Mind, it is one great Step toward a ſaving Change. It includes in it a Senſe of your being in a *loſt* and *miſerable* Condition, whilſt in a State of Sin: And at the ſame time, a moſt hearty Acknowledgment that the *Gain of the whole World*, and the fulleſt Enjoyment of ſenſible Things,

Things, which are vain and periſhing, can never make an amends for the *Loſs* of *your Souls*. It includes farther, ſomewhat of a *Deſire* towards GOD and *Heaven*, and *ſpiritual* Things; that you cannot be eaſy under the thought of being *for ever* rejected, and caſt off by Almighty GOD: Nay, that you are convinced, there is more real Satisfaction in the ways of Religion, *at preſent*, than in thoſe of Sin. But yet, how to have your Hearts ſo changed, and renewed, as to get out of the *State* you are in; and to get rid of your *ſinful* Inclinations to *ſenſible Objects*; and to ſerve GOD, and walk in his *Ways* as you *deſire* to do; this fills your Breaſts with the greateſt Anxiety, and employs your Thoughts in reſtleſs Contrivances and Concern.

If any ſhould caſt their Eyes upon this Paſſage, who are not gotten ſo far as I here ſuppoſe the Reader to be; let them ſeriouſly conſider what has been ſaid in the *foregoing Chapter*, and I am perſuaded nothing more in a way of *reaſoning* will be needful to produce ſuch a Temper of Mind.

But where this is truly the Caſe, I think the *following Directions* may be ſufficient to bring ſuch a Perſon into a ſafe and renewed State. Only, here, I muſt be-

ſpeak the Reader's *fulleſt and ſtrongeſt Reſolution* to comply with what is ſuggeſted, under every Particular that ſhall be laid before him. It is not the obſerving of *one*, but *all* the *Directions* I am going to mention, that muſt be endeavoured after: I mean, ſo far as they appear proper and neceſſary to ſecure this great End, your being *Born again*. To begin then with that which is moſt eaſy;

I. *Be very careful, and conſtant, in attending upon the Preaching of* GOD's *Word.*

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD. Rom. x. 17.

He has appointed a *ſtanding Miniſtry*, for this very End; that the Truths and Duties of Religion may be ſo *explain'd*, and *enforc'd*, as to render them impreſſive, and effectual to change and rule the *Hearts of Men*. And where GOD is pleas'd, by inward Grace, to concur with the outward Diſpenſation of his Word, even *that* Preaching which may ſeem very unlikely to produce ſuch an Effect as the *new Birth*, ſhall yet become *the Power of God unto Salvation*, Rom. i. 16.

You

You may, perhaps, be ready now to wiſh, that GOD would ſend an *Angel* from *Heaven*; or as the *rich Man* requeſted in the *Parable*, that he would ſend one immediately *from the Dead*, to inform your Minds; and to do ſome great and miraculous thing for you. But when you are only to look for Help from thoſe, of the *ſame Infirmities and Paſſions* with your ſelves, you may think that very little is like to be done toward your Renovation.

Let me, therefore, argue this Matter briefly with you. What could an Angel, or one from the Dead, ſay more, than is ſaid in the *Goſpel?* Or what could he do more, to prove the Truth of what he ſaid, than has been done by CHRIST and his *Apoſtles?* Or what way could he find, to the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, that ſhould give him a greater Power and Influence over them, than ſuch Appearances of GOD and Angels have formerly had? If an Angel was to appear but *once*, it would by no means equal the Force of the *daily* Pleadings and Inſtructions of GOD's *Miniſters:* And if an Angel was to *live* amongſt us, he would, in time we have reaſon to believe, meet with no better Treatment than the LORD of *Angels* did. There is a great deal of difference between *ſtartling* or terrifying

the Mind, and working a thorough *Change* in it: Apparitions from the other World might *alarm* us, for a *while*; but the Operation of Almighty Grace, by and with the Goſpel, is only able to *change* and new mould the *Heart*. And GOD *has given us this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of the Power might* appear to be *of him, and not of us*, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

Attend, therefore, upon the preaching of the Goſpel, as believing it to be the Ordinance of GOD. And let not the *Means* be thought inſufficient to gain their *End*, when under the *Direction*, and accompany'd with the *Bleſſing* of *him* that can do all things. You are not, indeed, to look for any thing from *us*, as though by our own Power and Skill we could bring you to GOD: But, your Expectation being once fixed on GOD, you cannot look for too much from *him*.

Yet here it muſt be added, that next to your having a Hope thus fixed on GOD; it is your Wiſdom, and your Duty, to chuſe that *Miniſtry* ſtatedly to attend upon, which you find moſt *inſtructive* and intelligible, moſt *ſerious* and affecting; and to be thankful to GOD, if you meet with Men whoſe *Gifts*, and *Manner* of diſpenſing the Goſpel, become ſuitable to you.

And, when at any time you find your ſelves under *Convictions*, there ought to be the utmoſt Concern that the *Grace of* God be not *receiv'd in vain*; or in other Words, that ſuch Convictions be not *loſt*. For by ſtifling or turning away from them, the moſt *agreeable* and *uſeful* Miniſtry will ceaſe to be of any *real* Benefit and Service to you: And by excuſing, from time to time, your *regard* to the Impreſſions which are made on your Minds, the moſt *important* Things will loſe their *Force*; and the moſt *earneſt* Sollicitations, will become but as an *uncertain unheeded* Sound.

Moreover, you ſhould be very careful not to abſent yourſelves *wilfully*, or for *ſlight* and trivial Reaſons, from the Place of *publick Worſhip*. What knoweſt thou, but that very Sermon, which thou turnedſt away from, might have done more for thee, than all that ever thou heard'ſt in thy Life? What knoweſt thou, but that very time, God might have given ſome ſecret and particular Inſtructions to the Preacher, to deliver thoſe things that ſhould have reach'd and chang'd thy Heart; when through a ſluggiſh, or worldly, or vain and trifling Temper, thou waſt kept from the Aſſembly of God's People?

There is one Caution however, that 'tis proper to ſubjoin here; namely, not

to

to look for a Change ſo ſudden and miraculous, as to have the *whole* Work done upon your Souls by *one Sermon.* Sometimes indeed it has been ſo, that a Man has *come* into a Place of Worſhip an *Enemy* to all that is Good, and has gone away thoroughly reſolv'd to become a *new Man.* Almighty Grace has made the Change in an *Inſtant.* But this is not to be uſually expected. And I think, it is much more deſirable, that our Light ſhould encreaſe *gradually:* and ſo the Change be carried on, by *ſlower* Steps and Degrees; than that it ſhould be brought about with ſuch *Violence,* as in ſome extraordinary Caſes it has been. One Point may more eaſily be gain'd upon us by one Sermon; and another by another Sermon; and a regular Attention to a *Courſe* of theſe, may do that for us, which *one* Diſcourſe could not ſo well have done. Therefore if you ſhould not find yourſelves wrought upon, in that extraordinary manner, which has been the Caſe of ſome; yet, if there be a gradual Light and Change, by a regular continued Attention to the Diſpenſation of GOD's Word, you may ſafely conclude your ſelves to be *born again* thereby. The Renovation of *ſome,* is like opening the Shutters of a Window, at Noon-Day; and letting in a *full Light* in-

to a Room at *once*. The renewing of *others*, is like the breaking in of the Morning's Light, into a Room which has all its Windows open to receive it: It appears very dim at firſt, but encreaſes gradually, 'till at laſt the Room is bright'ned and irradiated with the Noon-day's Sun.

So that, upon the whole, you ſee what reaſon there is for this Advice, and what regard ought to be had to it; to be conſtant and diligent, in attending upon the *preaching* of GOD's *Word*, in order to your being *renewed and born again*.

II. *There muſt be ſome time allow'd and ſet apart for Retirement, and ſerious Thoughtfulneſs.*

If the Heart be affected, and put upon any good Purpoſes and Reſolutions, *in* the time of *publick Worſhip*; you muſt endeavour, when that is *over*, to cheriſh ſuch Impreſſions; and to put in execution your good Intentions. Let it be your Care, as faſt as you can, to get into ſome *ſecret Place*; where you may be out of the reach of every thing that would divert, or diſtract you: And then, putting your ſelves into the beſt Poſture for ſerious Thoughtfulneſs that you are able, let thoſe things

things that have engaged your *Attention* in *publick*, be call'd to mind, and more distinctly applied to your *own State* and Condition, *in private*.

Whilst there is a shunning of Retirement, and Consideration, the strongest Convictions will not be able to make any *real* and *lasting* Change, either in your Tempers or in your Lives. Serious Thoughtfulness is necessary, to give every Conviction its proper Force: By this, we shall be led to contrive Matters so, as that we may afterward suit our Conversation and Behaviour to the Impressions that are made upon us. Thus much we are plainly taught, from that known Passage of the *Psalmist*; *I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies.* Psal. cxix. 59. He *thought*, and then he *turned*. Yea, his thinking closely and seriously engaged him *immediately* to set about his Duty: *I made haste, and delay'd not, to keep thy Commandments.* Verse 60.

Sometimes *afflictive Providences* may be very serviceable to promote a thoughtful, and retired Disposition of Mind: And *this* kind of Thoughtfulness may be still as effectual, if follow'd and improv'd, to produce a thorough Change, as *that*,

which proceeds from a being affected in *hearing* the *Word* of God. It is by Afflictions and Diſtreſſes only, that ſome Men are brought *to themſelves*: And till a gay romantick Fancy is corrected, and the Mind is brought to a juſt way of thinking, both on its own State, and the nature of all ſenſible Enjoyments; there will be no Inclination to return to God, or to live the Life of a *real Chriſtian*. Hence it is that the *Prodigal* in the *Parable* is repreſented, as firſt *coming to himſelf*, and then *returning to his Father*. After a diſtracted and thoughtleſs Life, his *Husks* brought him to think of his *Folly*, and of his *miſerable* abandoned State, together with the Plenty and the Comforts of his *Father's Houſe*: And by a due Conſideration of theſe, he was ſoon put into a Method, that prov'd ſucceſsful to bring about his Recovery.

But, whatever be the means of calling in our Thoughts from their ſinful Vagaries, and from the purſuit of lying Vanities; if they are not fixed cloſely upon the leading and moſt important *Truths of Religion*, they will never work a ſaving Change in us. There is a great deal of difference betwixt a Perſon's becoming *thoughtful* or *penſive* about his Life, and his Affairs in this World; and a *religious*

Conſi-

Consideration of his State and Condition, in the World to which at Death he must be remov'd. Therefore, the Scripture sums up *all other* Considerations, in this *one*; meditating on the *End of Life*. *O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter End.* That is, consider so, as to be affected with the *Certainty* of Death; not only as it is appointed unto Men in general, but to *my self* in particular, once to die. And then also to consider the *Uncertainty* of the *Time*, when Death shall overtake us; not knowing but we may be in Eternity every Moment. We must think, farther, of the *awful Consequences* of Death: That we must immediately *appear before the Judgment-Seat of* CHRIST, *to receive according to what we have done in the Body, whether good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10.

They that are duly affected with such Thoughts as *these*, will soon be carried to a multitude of *others*, which have a plain and very close *Connexion* with them. Thus, to consider our *latter End*, will lead us to think of the *Preparation* that is necessary to our Safety and Comfort, at such a time. This will put you upon considering your *own ways*, and how much you have done to *destroy* yourselves. It

will alſo lead you to think on GOD's *Ways* toward you, and how much he has done to *ſave* you. This will direct your Thoughts to a REDEEMER, and will open to you the Treaſures of Mercy in our LORD JESUS CHRIST; *who though he was rich, yet for your ſakes became poor*, and became a Sacrifice too, that he might bring you to GOD. In ſhort, to think ſeriouſly of ſuch a Change as *Death*, will make Men ſollicitous, firſt to have ſuch a Change as the *new Birth* paſs upon them; ſince without this they die, not only for a *time*, but for *ever*. And when once ſuch a Concern as this is thoroughly excited, there is a great deal done toward your being *Born again*.

III *You muſt frequently and diligently read the Holy Scriptures, and other divine Writings that may inſtruct you in the Nature of Converſion and true Piety.*

In the firſt and chief Place, your *Bibles* ſhould be ſearch'd and ſtudy'd very ſeriouſly and diligently. Here it is, that we have the Diſcoveries of eternal *Life*, and *Death*; with the Means of eſcaping the *Wrath*, and obtaining the *Joys* to come. Here, all the Treaſures of ſaving Wiſ-

dom

dom and Knowledge lie: And from hence it is, that all *other Writers* of ſacred Things derive their beſt Thoughts, and Rules of Conduct, in every Treatiſe of a religious nature.

Thoſe that read the Scriptures in order to their *Converſion*, ſhould eſpecially take care to begin with what is plain and obvious; and what more immediately relates to their *own* Caſe, in their Renovation and turning to God. Such as the Account of the *Returning Prodigal*, in the xv^th^ of St. *Luke*. St. *Paul*'s Narrative of his own Converſion, in the xxvi^th^ of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. That *Sermon* that prov'd the Means of converting three thouſand, in the ii^d^ Chapter of the ſame Book. Such Deſcriptions of a ſaving Change, as that in the vth *Epheſ.* from the 17th to the end; going on in the vi^th^ Chapter alſo to the 17th Verſe. And then, as an Excitement to ſhew the greater Regard to theſe, it will be proper to read ſuch Chapters as the xi^th^ to the *Hebrews*; which is a noble Liſt of great and good Men, that have deſpiſed and conquered the World, and the ſenſitive Nature, by their believing Regards to inviſible and eternal Things: And ſo to turn to the Examples of *preſent Judgments* on the Wicked and finally Impeni-

tent: As alſo to the moſt affecting Repreſentations of the *Future* Puniſhments and Rewards of Men, in *Heaven* or *Hell*: Theſe, I ſay, and ſuch like Places of Scripture, ought firſt to be carefully read and underſtood, by thoſe that are ſeeking after the *new Birth*. The *Pſalms*, and the devotional Parts of Scripture, ſhould be read till there is an intimate Acquaintance with them.

But now, as there are *Treatiſes* that collect and *lay together* the ſeveral Paſſages of *Scripture* which relate to one and the ſame thing; ſo it is adviſable, that ſome of theſe Writings ſhould be conſulted, as well as the ſacred Oracles. And I doubt not, but ſuch Treatiſes as have been publiſhed upon *Converſion*, *Repentance*, *Regeneration*, and holy *Reſolution*; in a plain Method, and in a modern Stile, and with a ſerious Spirit; have frequently been bleſs'd to the producing of that Change I am here directing to, as well as the *Bible* itſelf.

In all your Reading, you ſhould make it your Care, to form very *diſtinct* and *clear Notions* of what you read: Putting ſuch a Queſtion often to your ſelves, as that of *Philip* to the *Ethiopian*; *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* And when you

Acts viii. 30.

are

are considering what it is to be *Born again*, you should endeavour to inform yourself of the Nature and Consequences of Man's first *Apostacy* from his Maker; that you may conceive the more truly and affectingly, of his being *renew'd*, and *recover'd* out of such a Condition, by the *Gospel*. If we are not acquainted with our *natural* State, as it is a State both of *Sin* and *Misery*, we shall never *strive* (as we ought) to get *out* of it.

Nor are we qualify'd, till this is done, to obtain Mercy at the hands of a REDEEMER. We are told, that CHRIST *came to seek and to save that which was lost*. Not *all* that were so; for then, none must be condemned or cast off: But such as have a deep and *thorough Sense* that they are lost, without a SAVIOUR; and accordingly are brought to *his Terms* of being saved.

It is, therefore, farther requisite; that you should have very distinct Conceptions, of what is done on *his* part, and what is to be done on *yours*. CHRIST has done, and will do all the Work of a SAVIOUR; but he has not done, and he will not, yea, he cannot do the Work of a *Sinner*. He died for us, 'tis true; but he never undertook to *repent*, and *believe*, or become a *new Creature*, for any

Man: Nor did he purchaſe eternal Life and Salvation for any, *without theſe:* Nor has he purchaſed the *Spirit*, to work in us any way *unſuitably* to our *reaſonable* Natures and Capacities.

I might inſtance in ſome other things, had I not ſaid ſo much to explain the Doctrine of the *new Birth* already: But I ſhall refer the Reader to the *firſt Chapter* of this Treatiſe, if he yet ſtands in need of Information in this matter; and I beg that he would read it with a due Care and Attention.

For this I muſt repeat, that 'till you do in ſome meaſure underſtand theſe things, you ought to give very diligent Attendance to *reading* the *Scriptures*, and *other Books* that may help you to think aright, both of your *Condition* and your *Duty*.

IV. *You ſhould hereupon endeavour to affect your Souls with a Senſe of the Corruption of your Nature, and the many Sins that you have actually committed in your Lives.*

We find in our ſelves very ſtrong Inclinations to many things, which, even *natural Conſcience* tells us ought *not to be done*; and very great Reluctancy and Averſion

verſion to other things, that *ought to be done* by us. We may obſerve, a deal of Confuſion and Inconſiſtency in our *Thoughts*; a Perverſeneſs and Meanneſs in our *Wills*, and *Tempers*; and a prevailing Senſuality in our *Paſſions* and *Affections*, as alſo frequent *Jarrings* and *Contentions* amongſt theſe: From all which, you cannot but conclude, your *Nature* is very much diſorder'd: And therefore ſhould deeply lament with the *Pſalmiſt*, that you were *ſhapen in Iniquity*, and *conceived in Sin*. Pſal. li. 5.

O look to *Paradiſe*, and to a State of Innocence! conſider how wretchedly human Nature is now chang'd, and degenerate from what it once was. Surely that will put ſome ſuch Lamentation, as that of the *Prophet*, into your Mouths; *The Crown is fallen from our Head, woe unto us that we have ſinned.*

But then we muſt not ſatisfy our ſelves in bewailing our natural Depravity only; for, that is to charge all our Crimes upon our Anceſtors: We muſt, farther, take an account of our many *actual Tranſgreſſions*; and ſo *remember our own evil Ways, and our Doings that have not been good, as to loath our ſelves in our own ſight, for our Iniquities and for our Abominations.* Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

Here,

Here I would adviſe you to ſit down and think over the Sins of *Childhood*, and *Youth*, which you are able to call to mind. And take as diſtinct an Account, as you can, of your Miſcarriages when *at Home* with your Parents; and afterwards, when you were *ſent out* for Buſineſs, or Education, into the World.

Think of the *ſeveral Places* you have liv'd in, and what your Sins have been in each of theſe.

If you are ſo far advanced in the World, as to have Families of your own, think of your Faults in a *relative Capacity*: What Sins you have been guilty of againſt *Wife*, or *Husband*, againſt *Children* or *Servants*.

And ſo alſo think of your Sins againſt thoſe, you may have dealt with in a way of *Trade*; or convers'd with in a way of *Friendſhip*; or thoſe that you ſhould have help'd in a way of *Charity*.

Take an Account of the Sins of your *Tempers* and *Conſtitutions*.

Then mark down thoſe, that ariſe from your *outward Circumſtances*, and Condition.

Eſpecially take care to find out that, which is, moſt ſtrictly ſpeaking, your *own Iniquity*, (the Sin to which you have been moſt addicted;) and where, in any Inſtance, this has broken out in ſuch a manner,

ner, as to leave uneasy Impressions upon your Minds, and yet to be repeated, be sure to take an Account of all such Acts of Wickedness.

Let the *ten Commandments* be set before you, when you are making this Inquisition: And set down the several Sins which you apprehend you have been guilty of, in *doing* what is *forbidden*, or *neglecting* what is *required* under each Command.

After this, think of the Times when you *stifled Convictions*; and turn'd away from the Offers of Grace, and Calls to Repentance in the *Gospel*. That you have not only *sinned*, but been *impenitent* too.

Think of your *Sins* against a REDEEMER: That you have been willing to live, so long, in *Ignorance* of his Undertaking: Or that you have thought *too slightly and meanly* of his Sufferings, and Sacrifice: Or that you have *turn'd his Grace into Wantonness*, and because Grace has abounded, therefore you have abounded the more in Sin.

Think of the *Despite* you have done to the HOLY SPIRIT: *Resisting* his *Motions*, when you have been in publick Ordinances; and *putting by*, or excusing yourselves from a Compliance with his more secret Suggestions.

And

And then at the end of all, reckon up the ſeveral *Aggravations* of your Sins: That is, ſet down as far as you can remember,

The Mercies and Deliverances
The Judgments and Afflictions
The Counſels and good Advice
The Reproofs and Cenſure
The Light and Knowledge
The Vows and Promiſes

} you have ſinned againſt.

With *whatever elſe* you can think of, that will make your Sins appear the *more grievous* to you.

In the whole of this *Search* after Sin, you muſt reſolve that no *one* Tranſgreſſion ſhall be overlook'd, through a *wilful Concealment*, or a *negligent Search*, or a *vain Excuſe*. But lay thy ſelf as open as poſſible before GOD; and take pains even to find out thy forgotten and leſſer Iniquities; and be ſure not to admit a Thought of any thing at ſuch a time, that would cover thy Guilt.

Now ſpread the black Catalogue before thine Eyes, and ſee what thou canſt do to excite all manner of Reſentments againſt thy Sins, and againſt thyſelf becauſe of them.

Think of every thing that may excite thy *Shame*. The *Folly* of thy Actions; the *Baſeneſs* and *Meanneſs* of them; the *Reproach* which they deſerve from the *World*;

World; but eſpecially their *final expoſing* of thee before Angels and Men, at the laſt Day. Poſſibly this may *turn thy Heart* againſt, and provoke thine *Abhorrence* of, thoſe Actions that thus appear *ſhameful* to thee.

Again; try farther what thou canſt do to alarm thy *Fears*. See if the Apprehenſion of ſome *dreadful Calamity* overtaking thee, whilſt thou art going on in a ſinful Courſe, will not make thee cry out in ſuch Language as that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *My Fleſh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* O! ſee if the *Terrors of* God's *Law* and *Juſtice*, and eſpecially thoſe of the laſt *Judgment*, be not ſufficient to perſuade thee to Repentance.

Farther; let every thing that may work upon thy *Sorrow* and *Grief* be attended to. The *Ingratitude* thou haſt been guilty of, to the greateſt and beſt of Benefactors; thy *Forfeiture* of the moſt valuable Privileges and Bleſſings; the many *Miſchiefs* thou haſt, *now*, brought upon thyſelf; and the unſpeakable *Torments* that Sin *hereafter* expoſes thee to, which it is impoſſible for thee to eſcape if thou goeſt on in it. And then ſay, if theſe things be not enough to pierce and grieve the moſt dull and unimpreſſive Heart, that has

has once learnt to *realize* what it thinks of.

Once more; let every thing that can ſtir up thy *Hatred* and *Averſion*, be called to mind. And think, if thou canſt, of *any thing* in the world that deſerves to be hated more than *Sin*. The moſt *loathſome Creatures* have nothing in them ſo odious as *Sin*; nor the moſt *ungrateful* and *abominable Actions* of Men toward one another, any thing ſo frightful, as the ſinning againſt GOD.

If by this means thy Heart is ſet againſt thy evil Ways, then the Motions of Grace, and of a renewing SPIRIT, will be welcome; and then may'ſt thou reaſonably, and comfortably, expect them. And ſo, that *Shame*, and *Fear*, and *Sorrow*, and *Hatred*, which at firſt might be no more than the Exerciſe of ſo many *natural Paſſions*, ſhall be ſublim'd by the Operation of the Holy SPIRIT, into that ſaving Grace of a Chriſtian, *Repentance unto Life never to be repented of.*

V. Another of the preſcribed Means of Regeneration, is *humble and fervent Prayer.*

I know

I know it is ſaid, that *the Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord.* Prov. xv. 8. And I have heard it therefore argued by ſome, that ſuch as are in an unregenerate State are not to be put upon Prayer, or any religious Exerciſe; becauſe, whilſt in ſuch a State, nothing that is done by them can be acceptable or pleaſing to God. But this kind of Talk is plainly owing to a *criminal Neglect* of ſome Parts of *Scripture*, which occaſions the *wronging* and *miſinterpreting* of *others*. If he that is wicked, intends to *continue* in his Wickedneſs, without doubt *his Prayer* muſt be an *Abomination*; as it is a moſt inſolent Attempt to impoſe upon an *Omniſcient, Almighty* God. But if the wicked Man, under a ſerious Senſe of the Evil of his Ways, and with ſuch kind of Reflections on himſelf and his Condition as thoſe I have juſt mentioned, ſeeks to God for Grace to renew and change his Heart and Life, ſuch Prayer is far from being offenſive to the great *Father of Mercies.*

St. *Peter* does expreſsly require *Simon Magus*, as ill a Man as he was, and even whilſt he was utterly eſtrang'd to the *Grace* and *Spirit* of the *Goſpel*, *to pray to* God; and that upon a mere Probability, that

that the *Thought of his Heart might be forgiven him.* From hence I think there is abundant reaſon to conclude, that if a Man's *own Conſcience* ſhould condemn him; yea, if an *Apoſtle* or Meſſenger ſent immediately from GOD, ſhould tell him he is in the *Bondage of Sin and Iniquity*; yet it is his Duty to *pray* for pardoning renewing Grace.

And ſurely you have Encouragement enough to plead with GOD, when you find it expreſsly ſaid, that *he gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask him:* By which, our Saviour tells us a little after our *Text*, we are *born again.* And elſewhere, the Language of GOD to a ſinful People was, *Ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you: And ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when you ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart*, Jerem. xxix. 12, 13.

Luke xi. 13.

You ſay, that you are not able to do any thing *of yourſelf*, and that it is the Grace of GOD *alone* that muſt *renew and ſave you.* Can you not expreſs your ſelf thus in *Prayer* to GOD, as well as talk in ſuch a manner to your *Fellow-Creatures?* Go then, and tell a *gracious* GOD how *helpleſs* you are; and how *inſufficient* to *every good Work.* If you can do no more, yet ſo far ſurely you may go, to make

ſuch

ſuch Complaints in *ſecret*, as well as in Company; and to ſpeak to him *who ſees in ſecret*, as you would do to your Companions. Tell GOD therefore, inſtead of telling *them*, that you are convinced nothing but his *Almighty Grace* can renew and ſanctify you: And that you therefore come to beg this Grace of him. And withall be ſure to urge his *own Promiſes*, in and through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. I am perſuaded, you will have no reaſon to complain of the *Unſucceſsfulneſs* of ſuch a Courſe as this.

There is a very moving Repreſentation of ſuch a Frame and Temper of Mind, as that I would endeavour to work in you by thus ſending you to your Knees, in a *Diſcourſe of Mr.* N. Taylor, *concerning Faith in* CHRIST. This, with ſome little Alterations and Additions, I ſhall here recommend to you; as what may direct your Thoughts, and aſſiſt your Expreſſions, when firſt, under diſcouraging Apprehenſions of your ſelves, you look to a REDEEMER to help and ſave you.

" My *Sins* are many, and my *Danger* " is great, and my *Fears* are proportion- " able to *both*: What will become of me " to all *Eternity*, GOD only knows. There " is indeed Salvation for *loſt Sinners*,

" thro'

" thro' the *Blood* of a *crucify'd* JESUS;
" but I am terribly afraid I ſhall never get
" an Intereſt in it. Many *Diſcourage-*
" *ments* break in, like Wave after Wave,
" on my diſtreſſed *Soul*;" and I have ſcarce *Faith* and *Hope* enough to put up a *Prayer* to GOD. And yet I cannot forbear crying, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner!* — If ſuch ſhort, but ardent Breathings as theſe, may obtain the gracious Regards of my great LORD, I ſhall be happy. If theſe will *not* avail, what ſhall a poor Creature do, that knows not how to order his Words, or how to govern his Thoughts, or to perform any thing that is really good! — O how am I toſs'd in my own Spirit? — " I am told
" there is a ſafe and deſirable *Harbour* be-
" fore me; but, Lord! at how great a
" diſtance am I from it? it is not long,
" ſince I *had any thought about* it; and I
" fear I ſhall never *reach* it, I ſee the
" Waves ſwell and prevail ſo much be-
" fore me. LORD, *ſave me, or I periſh!*
" — Well, I muſt and will try, what
" *rich, ſovereign, free Grace* will do for
" me. If I am the *vileſt* Sinner that e-
" ver *was*, then CHRIST had never yet
" ſo fair an Opportunity of ſhewing his
" *tender Love*, his *infinite Power*, his *un-*
" *ſhaken Faithfulneſs*, and the *Value* and

" *Efficacy* of his *Blood*, in all their Beau-
" ty and Glory, as now he has. What
" tho' I am an *obſcure* Perſon, and ſhould
" never have an opportunity to *publiſh*
" it on Earth; yet it will not die as a
" *Secret in my Boſom.* The happy Ti-
" dings will *run through* the Heavens; and
" the *bleſſed Inhabitants* above will won-
" der at ſuch exceeding Grace overflow-
" ing to *me.* Eternal *Hallelujahs* will be
" ſung to the LAMB of GOD on my
" account. I will, therefore, caſt my
" ſelf into the *Arms* of infinite Mercy:—
" But that's too proud and forward an
" Expreſſion; I would rather ſay, I'll
" throw my ſelf at his *Feet:* If he ſpurn
" me away, I can but die *then*, and die
" I muſt if I *don't apply* to him. Who
" knows, but he may ſtretch out the
" *Scepter* of his *Grace*, and then I ſhall
" live. However, *live* or *die*, I'll be-
" take my ſelf to him; if ever Help
" comes, I know it muſt come *this way.*
" And as I am reſolved to *pray*, ſo I
" will *wait* the Iſſue of my Prayers; and
" ſee how it may pleaſe the moſt com-
" paſſionate *Lover of Souls* to deal with
" mine.

VI. You

VI. You may now *venture to make a ſolemn Dedication of your ſelves to* God, *thro'* Christ Jesus, *as thoſe that are deſirous to be his in an everlaſting Covenant.*

When you have been *entreating the Favour of* God with your *whole Hearts*; and pleading the *Merits* and Mediation of his *Son*, in whom he has declared himſelf to be *ever well pleaſed*; you may then proceed to a *Surrender* of your Souls into his hands; and may engage yourſelves by *particular Vows* and *Promiſes*, to be the Lord's.

Pſal. cxix. 58.

Matth. iii. 17. *and* xvii. 5.

This you muſt take care to do, with the greateſt *Seriouſneſs* and Solemnity. Let it be done in a way that may moſt thoroughly impreſs and engage your *own Hearts*; and you may depend upon it, that ſuch as are thus brought to give up themſelves to God, he will *in no wiſe caſt off*. And 'tis certainly fit you ſhould act in this Caſe, as Men are us'd to do in other Affairs of Importance; that is, not only in *Word*, but in *Writing*, this Covenant Dedication of yourſelves ſhould be made. You ſhould *draw up a Summary* of what you engage both to *be*, and to

to *do*; and then *ſign* it with your own *Hand*, as a Teſtimony of your acting with the utmoſt *Conſideration*, *Heartineſs*, and *Reſolution* in this matter.

I am far from being ſingular, in *giving* ſuch *Advice* as this: And I am not the only Perſon that has reaſon to be thankful to GOD for an *early complying* with it. Mr. *Gouge*, Mr. *Allen*, and others of our moſt ſerious Writers on the Subjects of *Converſion* and *Regeneration*, have inſiſted on ſuch a Method, as the moſt proper way of *entring* upon a religious Life. And when Men are once brought to *apply* their thoughts to the Things of GOD, and the Concerns of their Souls, as they *ought* to do, they will not call it a *Task*, or account it an *unneceſſary Burden* to be obliged to this. When *Iſaiah* is foretelling the *Converſion* of thoſe that ſhould live in *After-Times*, and of thoſe that were *Aliens* to the *Covenant of Promiſe* made with *Iſrael*, he repreſents it thus; that *One ſhall ſay I am the* LORD'*s: And another ſhall call himſelf by the Name of* JACOB: *And another ſhall* ſubſcribe *with his* Hand *unto the* LORD. Iſai. xliv. 5.

When, therefore, you have conſidered well the *Terms* upon which you are to give up yourſelves to GOD; if you find

a *Willingneſs* and *Deſire* to comply with them, *write* them out: And then venture, by *ſubſcribing your Hand* to them, to declare your *Acceptance* of them, and your *hearty Reſolution* to obſerve them.

In this firſt ſolemn Dedication of your ſelves to GOD in CHRIST, I would adviſe you to make uſe of the following Words, or ſomething of the ſame Import.

O LORD GOD, the Maker of Heaven and Earth! by whoſe *Word*, and for whoſe *Glory*, I and all Creatures were made: I now come to acknowledge thee as the Author of my Being, and the Preſerver of my Life, and the Giver of every thing I enjoy. And therefore do now ſubmit myſelf to thee, as my rightful Owner and Sovereign LORD. *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and in thy ſight, and am not worthy to be called thy Child:* I ſhall think myſelf highly honoured, and very happy, if thou wilt but *receive me* as one of thy *meaneſt Servants.* I here bring thee a *Creature*

of

of thine own, that has been *ſtraying* from thee. This *Soul* and *Body* now proſtrate at thy Footſtool, I humbly offer unto thee; that thou mayeſt *go over* thy Work *again*, and *create me anew* after thine *own Image*; and ſo will I be thy *faithful Servant as long as I live.*

O BLESSED JESUS! if *thou* wilt now take my *Part*, and plead my *Cauſe* with the FATHER, I am ready to profeſs myſelf *thy Diſciple*, upon thine *own Terms*; and to *follow thee* (if my Heart deceive me not) *whitherſoever thou goeſt.* I do ſincerely give up myſelf to thy *Teaching* and *Inſtruction: O give me Underſtanding!* that I may *know the Truth as it is in thee.* I do unfeignedly conſent to thy *Government*; and with a Mind willing to obey thee, I can now ſay, LORD, *what wilt thou have me to do?* I will aſcribe all the Honour of my Salvation to thy meritorious *Death*, and powerful *Interceſſion:* And in theſe alone will I repoſe my Truſt.

And now if my LORD will undertake that his *Grace ſhall be ſufficient for me*, there is nothing that I ſhall think too *difficult* to *attempt*, or too *much* to *ſuffer for thee*. I do liſt myſelf this day under thy Banner, as the great *Captain of my Salvation*; affrighted at myſelf, to think that I have ſo long been under the Power and Tyranny of the *Devil*, whom I ſhall from this Moment *reſiſt to the uttermoſt*. I am perſuaded this *World* is nothing but *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*; and therefore ſhall ſet myſelf, by thy *Help*, and according to thy *Example*, to *conquer* it, and bring it *into ſubjection*. I have found my *own Heart* corrupt, wicked and deceitful, and therefore I will no longer pretend to manage for myſelf, but ſhall rejoice to *give up every Thought*, and *Will*, and *Affection* intirely to *thee*. I am now deſirous to be thine, ſo as not to be another's: Thine, and not the Devil's; thine, and not the World's; thine, and not my own.

To

To thee, O HOLY SPIRIT! I acknowledge myſelf *indebted* for theſe and all other good Inclinations: And, that I may be enabled to *hold to* my preſent Purpoſes, and to *improve* in a *holy*, *heavenly Diſpoſition* of Mind, I now *caſt myſelf upon thee*, for all that *Direction* and *Aſſiſtance*, which my Circumſtances from Time to Time may require. Henceforward, I ſhall *yield* myſelf to thy *Conduct*, and Influence: And ſhall make it my Care to attend to all thy *Motions* and *Convictions*; both in performing my *Duty*, and abſtaining from *Sin*; and ſo to do thoſe Things that may be moſt pleaſing to thee.

Thus, O FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT! with my whole Heart I deſire *freely* and *fully*, to devote myſelf to thee: Chuſing thee for my *everlaſting Portion*, and promiſing to ſerve thee as my *ſupreme Maſter* and LORD, whilſt I have a Being.

And as a Proof of my *Sincerity*, and of my ardent Desire to *make good* such a Profession, I am willing to bind myself, by *setting my Hand* to all this; that it may be a Witness *for*, or *against* me, as I behave myself *agreeably*, or *disagreeably*, to what I now do.

* * * *

This I would advise you to *read* over and over, before you subscribe it. And if there be any *particular Expressions*, that you cannot so *fully* make your *own*, as may be necessary to the affixing your *Name*, you will do well to make *such Alterations*, as you think may render it more suitable to your *own Case*. But whenever you *sign* this, or any other Instrument of the like nature, let your Minds be as free as possible from all other Affairs; that you may be the more *perfectly engaged* in such a Transaction, and the more *deeply impress'd* by it.

Lastly, What farther remains, is *only to abide by what you have done, and to try how far you can go, in amending your Lives and Actions.*

'Tis

'Tis poſſible, that after the moſt ſolemn Surrender of your ſelves to GOD, you may yet for a while *think* you are *neglected* by him. Yea, your Temptations may be ſo much the *ſtronger*, and your Conflicts the greater for a Time, that you may *think* you are in a *worſe* Condition than *before* you laid yourſelves under ſuch Engagements. *We are not ignorant of the Devices* of the *Devil*; who, when he finds you are like to be *reſcued* from his Dominion, will give you all the *Diſturbance* and *Trouble* that is in his power. But this, however, ſhould not occaſion any *Diſlike* of what you have done, or any *Diſtruſt* of the Mercy of GOD, to whom you have committed your Souls.

If you think your Prayers, and your Offerings, have not *yet gone up with Acceptance* before your LORD, you muſt repeat them; and *cry* the *louder*: As the two *blind Men* did, when CHRIST had *paſſed by them*; JESUS! *thou Son of* David, *have Mercy on us.* Yea, if you ſhould interpret his Language towards *you*, to be the ſame with that, to the *Woman of* Canaan; *It is not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and to caſt it to* Matth. xv. 26.

Dogs; yet ſtill, *true Humility* will enable you to *form* a *Plea* from thence; not to *fix* a *Diſcouragement* in yourſelves upon it. LORD, I acknowledge myſelf a vile, unworthy Creature; if I am ſet amongſt the *Dogs*, it is but where I deſerve to be: But let me not meet with *worſe* Treatment than *they* do, which are allowed to *eat of the Crumbs that fall* from their Maſter's *Table*. O let down ſomething from thyſelf, that may be a Token of thy owning and accepting me; though it ſhould be never ſo *ſmall a Favour*, it ſhall be to me a *valued One*. But let not my LORD be angry, if I go on to ſay; That though I am not worthy, *with Dogs*, to gather the *Crumbs* that fall from *thy Table*, yet *I will not let thee go* until thou bleſs me with *Childrens Bleſſings*.

Thus if we not only *ask*, and *ſeek*, but continue to *knock*; and, with an unwearied Importunity, ſollicit for Grace and Mercy; we ſhall not be finally diſappointed. We are moſt ſure we have to do with one, that is *able* to ſave to the uttermoſt: And it would not be ſo hard, to be aſſured of his *Willingneſs* to help and ſave us, if it was not one part of our Sin and Miſery, in a natural State, to be diſtruſtful and afraid of the great GOD.

Theſe

These Fears and Suspicions (amongst other Disorders) we are seeking to be *delivered from*, in our *Regeneration*; and therefore must not give way to them, however we may find reason to *complain* of them.

But to proceed to the other Part of this last Direction; you must *try how far you can go in amending your Lives and Actions*. Try, tho' you *fall short* of what you attempt: It will make you more sensible of your *own Weakness* and Insufficiency: It will shew you *where* all your Help and Strength lies: And it will make you *more earnest* in imploring Aid and Assistance *from above*.

Try what you can do, to *restrain* yourselves from the *Sins* you have been most apt to commit. Possibly upon exerting your Resolution and Endeavours this way, you may find some Sins *more easily* forsaken and subdued, than you could have expected. Possibly you may find, the *Grace* you have been seeking after, has been *given in*, even whilst you were *praying* for it. However, there are some *common Actions*, that may be altered and reformed, by the help of *common Grace*: And these, you must first begin with. For instance; he that us'd to spend his LORD'S *Days* in the *Fields*, or in *pub-*

lick Houſes, or in *viſiting* his *Friends*; may with the ſame, perhaps leſs *bodily Labour*, go to the *Place* of GOD's Worſhip, or to *converſe* with thoſe that would be *ſerviceable* to him in the Matters of *Religion*. He that could *lye*, and *ſwear*, and *curſe*, and *prophane* the *Name* of GOD; may as eaſily be *ſilent*, as employ his Tongue in ſuch a manner. He that could *defraud*, or *ſtrike*, or *injure* his Neighbour, cannot pretend Want of Power to forbear ſuch Actions. Every one muſt be ſenſible, upon the firſt mention of theſe Things, that it requires greater Power to *do* them, than to be *ſtill* and *unactive*, and to do nothing at all.

Now, if you can for the preſent, go no farther than this; it is ſomething very conſiderable towards the *Reformation* I am ſpeaking of. It is *one half* of the Work, to *ceaſe to do evil*; and the *other* half is, *to learn to do well*. And if a good GOD obſerves us ſtriving to pleaſe him, in the former reſpect; we have abundant reaſon to truſt him, as to the latter: That he will *furniſh* us for *every good* Work, and enable us, more and more, to *abound therein*. It is obſervable, that when the *Prodigal was yet a great way off*,

Iſai. i. 16, 17.

off, the *Father ſaw him, and ran to meet him:* And he has not leſs Concern for, or Regard to, returning Prodigals *now*, than he had in *former Times.* He is as ready to meet, and help, and encourage them as ever.

So that to cloſe this Head; where ſerious *Conſideration*, *Prayer*, and *devoting ourſelves* to GOD, is accompany'd with the *beſt Endeavours* of which we are capable; we may then comfortably expect, and ſhould wait for, the *ſpecial Grace* and Aſſiſtance of a divine SPIRIT, that may work in us yet more effectually, to our *complete Sanctification* and *Salvation.*

In the *Concluſion* of this *Chapter*, let me engage thoſe that are, themſelves, in a *ſafe State* (if any ſuch ſhould look over this *Treatiſe*) to *pray* earneſtly, and with a hearty Concern, for *them* that may now be in the *Struggles* of this *new Birth.* Thoſe that cannot help them any *other way*, yet may do it by their *Prayers.* You ſhould therefore intreat for them, that they may not ſtrive, or be under Convictions, *in vain*; but that they may become the *Children* of GOD, by partaking of his *Nature*, and ſo be brought into his *Family.*

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Every one that is thus added to the *Church* of CHRIST, brings ſo much more of his *Preſence* and *Spirit* into the *Aſſembly* where he *worſhips*, as he is hereby poſſeſs'd of: yea, he adds Strength to a REDEEMER's *Intereſt* in the World. He adds alſo to the *Joy* of *Heaven*; and will in a particular manner be a *Joy* and a *Crown* to thoſe that are any way *inſtrumental* in bringing him to GOD.

Let us then be very fervent in our Petitions for ſuch: That the *Wit*, or *Malice*, or *Vices* of thoſe with whom they converſe, may not prevent the good Effect of any ſerious Impreſſions that have been made on their Souls; nor the *Aſſaults* and *Suggeſtions* of the *Devil*, diſcourage them. And, as many of the Children of religious Parents, are now become *Deſerters* of that which is good; and are taking part with the profane, and irreligious World; ſo ſhould we double our Requeſts to GOD, that he would bring in *others*. For my own part, I am not without hope, that even thoſe, who are *brought up* in *Sin* and *Folly*, may yet become *Witneſſes* for GOD: And that many who are *Enemies*, may yet become *Examples* of *true inward Piety* and Religion, in the midſt of a *crooked preverſe Generation*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Evidences of being Born again.

THE Deſign of this Chapter is to ſet before you the *particular Inſtances* of that Change, which is wrought in the *Hearts* and *Lives* of them that are ſaid to be *born again.* Theſe are ſometimes put into the *Explication*, but I rather chooſe to inſiſt on them as *Evidences* of the *new Birth.* *Some* Things I may have occaſion to mention, that are neceſſarily *included* in the Account of thoſe firſt Impreſſions from above, that are ſaving and effectual: *Others* there are that will be found only, and wholly *conſequent* thereupon. But I think it moſt proper, and uſeful, to conſider *both together*; that we may have the more full and compleat View of them; and ſo, be able to paſs a truer Judgment upon ourſelves, whether we are really renewed or not.

I heartily wiſh, that ſuch as have been *deceiving* themſelves, with an Imagination that all *is well with them*, would read

read over, and think of, the following Evidences of a ſaving Change, till they *become ſenſible* of their State and Condition. And I ſhould rejoice to contribute any thing towards the *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of thoſe that are full of *Doubts* and *Fears*, but yet truly *regenerate*; by helping them to produce ſuch Proofs of their being the *Children of* God, as may ſafely be depended upon.

Let it be conſidered then, that wherever a ſaving Change is wrought, it will diſcover itſelf, both in the Mind and Temper *inwardly*, and in the Converſation and Behaviour *outwardly*.

I. When a Man is truly regenerate, *there are plain Evidences of his being ſo, in his Mind and Temper.*

Tho' the *different*, and nobler Exerciſe of the reaſonable Powers, and altering the *general Bent* and Diſpoſition of the Soul, may not be *ſo diſcernable* in *ſome*, as in *others*; yet, there is enough to be obſerved in *all*, if they ſtrictly look into themſelves to determine this Matter, —whether ſuch a *Change* be *really* wrought in them, or not.

1. The

1. The Spirit of him that is Born again, *is very lowly and humble.*

When renewing Grace reach'd the Heart of a poor *Publican*, and firſt taught him to *pray* an acceptable *Prayer* to GOD, he did not think himſelf worthy ſo much as to approach the *Temple* or any thing that was *Sacred*; he *ſtood afar off*, and *ſmote* upon his *Breaſt*; in very *ſhort*, but very *humble* Language, pouring out his Soul before the Almighty, — GOD *be merciful to me a Sinner!* Luk. xviii. 13.

A Principle of Grace, does ſo much *greaten* our Views of the *divine Perfections*; and, in ſuch a manner, repreſent the *whole* of GOD's *Proceedings* towards the Children of Men; that *Self* ſinks into *nothing:* And we know not where to caſt ourſelves into a Place or Poſture *low enough*, when we lift up our Eyes towards him that *dwelleth in the Heavens*.

Yea, there is a mighty Alteration, as to the *Lowlineſs* and *Humility* of thoſe that have been under the Influences of a regenerating SPIRIT, even toward their *Fellow-Creatures*. To this is owing (what you may poſſibly have ſeen, and wondered at) the exceeding *Reverence* and *Reſpect* which has been ſhewn, by ſome,

toward thoſe *Miniſters* that have been Inſtruments of their Conviction and Converſion. Though before, ſuch Perſons would have been ready to treat Men of our Character with *Inſolence* or *Diſregard*; yet *now*, they eſteem us worthy of *double Honour*: And think they cannot have too great a Veneration, for thoſe that are truly *ſerious*, and have been any way ſerviceable to make them *ſo*.

And then farther; this Humility and *Poverty of Spirit* will ſhew itſelf, in one Inſtance or other toward *All*: He that is *born of the* SPIRIT, looks upon them that he thinks are thus renewed, as the *excellent Ones of the Earth*; and is ready to prefer the Attainments and Graces of almoſt *every ſuch Perſon* that he meets with, before his *own*. And where any appear contrary to him, he yet carries it with great Meekneſs toward them, and is particularly careful not to give juſt occaſion of Offence to them. Yea, ſuch is the Character of the true Chriſtian, that he is *cloathed with Humility*: This is what ſhews itſelf in every Condition of Life; and becomes a Dreſs that is worn at all Times.

1 Pet. v. 5.

2. The

2. The general and prevailing Diſpoſition of a Soul that is born again, *will be very ſincere and upright.*

Folly, and Falſhood, and Perverſeneſs, are naturally bound up in our Hearts. Whilſt unrenewed, it may be ſaid of *every Man*, that *he walketh in a vain Shew:* He ſets up thoſe things for *Excellencies* in himſelf, that are mere *Vanities* and of no intrinſick Value; or elſe, he *pretends* to thoſe *Virtues*, and recommending Qualifications, of which he is *really deſtitute*; and would be eſteemed quite *another* Perſon, to what in *Fact* and in *Truth* he is. He would be thought to *know* Things of which he is ſadly *ignorant*; I mean, the Things of GOD and his *Salvation*: And will talk as boldly, and peremptorily about them, as if all the Proceedings of the *Judge* of Quick and Dead, were to be determined by his *Thoughts* and *Tongue*. He would be thought poſſeſs'd of thoſe Graces, to which his Life is a *Contradiction*; and will needs aſſume to himſelf the Honour of being a Member of the *true Church*, when he has nothing of *true Religion*. Thus alſo in the whole of his Converſation and Affairs in the World, if you ſtrictly obſerve ſuch a Man, Pſal. xxxix. 6.

Man, you will generally find him under one *Diſguiſe* or another; except, when he is gratifying his *Humour* or his *Vices*, and then indeed you may come to a thorough Knowledge of him.

The *Reverſe* of this, is the Character of him that is born from above. He is one that is truly ſenſible of the *Emptineſs* and *Deceit* of all the *gay*, the *wealthy* Appearances of Men in this World: And he is ready to *confeſs* the Inſufficiency of all theſe Things, either to add to his *Worth*, or to make him *happy*. And then in Matters of Religion, he is one that does not carry his *Pretenſions* to Knowledge, to Goodneſs, to inward Qualifications, or to outward Privileges, *farther* than what he finds *good Ground* for, in himſelf. He does not affect to *appear* better than he *is*; but in *Secret*, and at *Heart*, is many degrees beyond what he ſeems to be before others. Yea, I have ſometimes thought, that to look upon a good Man in his *Weakneſſes* and *Imperfections*; and to hear him acknowledge, as the *Saints* in *Scripture* have done, his very *worſt* Failings and Miſcarriages; has added a *Luſtre* to that part of his Character, that *he is without Guile*. And if that Expreſſion be fully attended to, I do not any

John i. 47.

any where know a *brighter* Deſcription of one that is born again, or a *better* Evidence of our being *new Creatures.*

3. The *Underſtanding of him that is Born again, is enlightned to diſcern thoſe things of which before it was ignorant, or at leaſt, to which it ſhew'd no juſt Regard.*

Hence it is, that the *Scripture* makes uſe of ſuch *Phraſes* to deſcribe this Change, as from *fooliſh* being made *wiſe*, and being turned from *Darkneſs* to *Light*: Ye *were ſometimes Darkneſs, but now are ye Light in the* LORD. Hereby intimating to us, that the *Diſcoveries* which renewing Grace makes to the *Soul*, are like the breaking in of *Light* to the *bodily Eyes* when a Man has ſate ſome time in *Darkneſs.* Whilſt the Room where he ſate was dark, tho' the very *ſame* Furniture, Paintings, and Ornaments were in it, that *afterward appear*, yet he ſees *nothing at all* of them; but as ſoon as the *Light* ſhines upon him, he has then a great deal of Pleaſure and Entertainment in *viewing* what is *about him.* Thus, the great *Truths* of *Religion* are moſt fully revealed, and laid before us; but we *perceive* them *not* (at leaſt in their Excellency and Importance) till a *Heavenly Light*

Light ſhines into our Minds: And then, with the Apoſtle, we are ready to cry out, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Knowledge and Wiſdom of* GOD! Rom. xi. 33.

Thoſe eſpecially, that have been brought up *Strangers* to every thing of a religious nature, that have *never been* inſtructed in the Scriptures, or the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity; have an *amazing Scene* opened to them, when firſt they turn their Thoughts to Religion, and are taught to *realize* the Things that are *Eternal*. Such Converts are thoroughly ſenſible of the *Illumination* of their Minds by a renewing SPIRIT; and nothing more needs to be ſaid under this Head, with reſpect to them. But in other Caſes, when Men have attain'd a *ſpeculative Knowledge* of the generally receiv'd Notions of Religion; or where, from *their Infancy*, any have *known the Scriptures*, and have learned by *heart* the chief Things contained therein, it is not ſo eaſy to diſcover the *Difference* there is in their *underſtanding* of divine Things, *before* and *after* their Converſion.

Natural Reaſon is manifeſtly more lively and penetrating in *ſome*, than in *others*: And the ſeveral Ways of *Education*, do make a very great difference even in them,

them, that are of *equal Capacities*: Insomuch, that the *first* Principles of Religion *written in our Hearts*, may be understood, and talk'd of with *greater Clearness*, by many who are guided only by *natural Light*, than by others that are enlightened with *saving Knowledge*: But then, these Principles have not the *same* Effect and Influence upon *both*. There is another kind of *Attention* to them, *Relish* for them, and *practising* upon them, where they are *Spiritually* discerned, than where they are understood, only by the force of good *natural Parts*; or the advantages of a *polite Education*. And there are *some Truths* in the Christian Religion of such a nature, that the *Apostle* says the *natural Man* (even the Man of Reasoning and Learning) *cannot receive* them; but *only he*, who is *taught* by the SPIRIT of GOD. 1 Cor. xi. 14.

We may very well compare the *rational* and *spiritual* Man, when reading the Terms of Salvation and the Promises of the *Gospel*, to a *Lawyer*, and an *Heir*, reading of the same *Will*: The *Lawyer* considers only the Sense and Expression of the several Articles, so as to observe what is the Force and Import of them *according to Law*: But the Heir reads every

every Article with a very distinct *Application* of it to *himself*, in what is *bequeathed* to him; and diligently observes, what is *required* of him. He forms his Measures and Conduct thereupon, lays it *by* as his *Treasure*, and as the *Security* upon which he depends for all that he enjoys. Such a kind of Knowledge is that, which the *renewed Mind* is furnish'd with, as to *spiritual* and *heavenly* Things: A Knowledge, that shews us our *Interest* in them; and so must needs excite another kind of *Attention* and *Regard*, than where they are made Matters of *mere Speculation*.

So also, in the Case of those that, from their *Childhood*, have been acquainted with the *Holy Scripture*; we shall find a very great difference between their *first Sense* of Things, and *that*, which by *renewing Grace* they are brought to. The Memories of such, are stored with Variety of excellent and useful Passages, from the *Word of* GOD: They have learnt perhaps, several *Summaries* of Religion: The *Articles* of *Faith*, and the *Rules* of *Duty*, which are commonly received in the Christian World, may be very readily and exactly *recited* by them: But all is *cold* and *ineffectual*, till the SPIRIT *of Regeneration* gives them their proper Force

and

and Influence. While they *pronounce* the moſt ſolemn, and ſubſtantial, and ſelf-concerning Truths, yet all paſſes merely for *Words of Courſe*, till Divine Grace makes them ſenſible of the vaſt *Weight* and *Meaning* of what has been rendred ſo familiar to them.

We may therefore conclude, from theſe ſeveral Inſtances, that wherever a *ſaving Change* is wrought in a Soul, it will introduce, and improve, *ſuch a Knowledge* of the Things of GOD, as thoſe that are in a *natural* State are *Strangers* to. If not in the Things *themſelves* that are known, yet in the *manner* of knowing them, I believe this may *always* be obſerv'd.

After I have *thus* explain'd, the Underſtanding's being *enlightned*, in him that is *born again*; I think there is no room left, for any Man to conceive well of himſelf, merely from his having imbib'd a Set of *Good*, or as ſome would ſpeak, *Orthodox Notions* in Religion. Nor will a Man's being furniſhed with a Set of *new Notions*, that may for a while *ſurpriſe* and *entertain* him, prove, that he is a *new Creature*. Nor yet, on the other hand, can any one reaſonably conclude from what has been ſaid, that his State is *bad*, if his Knowledge of divine Things be

affecting,

affecting, and duly *operative*; tho' it may not be ſo great, or ſo lately obtain'd, as to appear any thing *extraordinary* to him.

4. *The Will of him that is Born again, is brought to an entire Submiſſion and Obedience to the Will of* God.

Some of the *firſt* Words, that converting Grace put into the Lips of St. *Paul*, were, — Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?* From which time, a furious ſelf-opinionated *Perſecutor* became a tractable ſubmiſſive *Learner* of the *Truth as it is in* Jesus.

O the Power of Divine Grace, to remove all the *Prejudices* and *Obſtinacy* of Men! and to correct the *Stubbornneſs* and *Reluctancy* of the Will, againſt the *Laws*, or the *Providence* of God. By this means a true Convert is enabled to get above the Inſtigations of a deceitful envious *World*, the ſinful Vanity of his *own* Spirit, or the Malignity and Subtilty of the Tempter. While our Wills are determined by the common *Behaviour*, and *Inclinations*, of thoſe amongſt whom we live; or directed by ſome *reigning Corruption* in our ſelves; or ſubject to the *Wiles* and *Suggeſtions* of the Wicked one; there is an *Enmity* to God, and to what he *requires* of us: But as ſoon as a Prin-

ciple of Grace prevails in the Soul, it brings every Thought and Inclination into *subjection.*

Hereby we are brought greatly to revere the *Will* of God, in his *Word:* And the *Commandment* is acknowledged to be *holy, just, and good.* Holy in its *Precepts;* Just in its *Threatnings;* Good in its *Promises;* and *all,* in its great *End* and *Design,* most excellently contriv'd, and fit to be subscrib'd to in every thing. Rom. vii. 12.

Grace teaches us also to *bow* to the *Will* of God in his *Providence.* Though our own Projects are cross'd, and those Prospects which we thought we had before us may be cut off; yet we are taught to acquiesce in the sovereign Disposals of our great Governor and Owner in every Occurrence of our Lives. Our Schemes of *Action* are all submitted to him; our *Possessions* and *Enjoyments* are all resign'd into his hands; and our *Expectations* are made entirely dependent upon him, to *accomplish,* or *over-rule* them, as he sees best.

Not that there is such a Subjection in the Will of a regenerate Man, as to make *no Resistance* to the *Commands,* or *Disposals* of Almighty God: For then there

would never be any of those *Struggles* or *Conflicts*, which good Men continually complain of, between *Grace* and *Corruption:* But there is such a Subjection in him that is *Born again*, That, in his *Esteem*, he gives a *Preference* to the Will of God; and, in his *Endeavours*, strives to be more and more conformed to it; and, in *Fact*, this does at *last prevail* against all the *enslaving* Motions of an untoward Volition and Inclination.

Solomon, in the Book of *Proverbs*, frequently describes an ill Man as one that has a *perverse* and *froward Heart*; which cannot be *led* and *governed* by any Methods or Directions, though never so wise or good. He that is *Born again*, must therefore be delivered, in some measure, from this Disorder; and, as to the *general Bent* of his Mind, must become *tractable* and *submissive*, ready to yield to every thing that would make him *wiser* and *better*.

I shall only add here; That where this is sought for as an *Evidence* of Regeneration, we are not to form a Judgment, either of ourselves or others, from some *particular Indispositions* of the Soul; from its *untoward Temper* at some times, and under extraordinary Provocations; but, from the general, and *most settled Disposition* of it.

5. *The*

5. *The Conſcience of him that is born again, is tender and faithful.*

Natural Conſcience is neither ſo *ſoon* alarm'd upon a Miſcarriage, nor ſo *eaſily* convinced of a Fault, nor ſo *much* concerned at what is amiſs, nor ſo *hard* to forgive and *quiet* itſelf after an Offence, as the *renewed Conſcience* is: So that in all theſe Inſtances, we may obſerve a very great Difference between the Regenerate, and the Unregenerate.

Natural Conſcience is alarm'd, only when Men are guilty of *open* and *ſcandalous* Sins: The renewed Conſcience takes very great notice even of *leſſer* and *ſecret Faults.*

When natural Conſcience convicts of Sin, it does what it can to *colour over* and *excuſe* it; and to make it appear in the moſt *favourable manner*, upon a Repreſentation of it: The renewed Conſcience is careful to look upon every thing as it *really is*; and to take in every *Circumſtance* of a Tranſgreſſion, whether it make it ſeem *greater*, or leſs than of *it ſelf* it might be.

While the natural Conſcience needs the utmoſt *exciting* and awakening, to make it ſenſible of the *great Evil* there is in Sin: The renewed Conſcience needs

no *Arguments* or *Eloquence* to move it, but it is presently filled with a very deep *Uneasiness* and *Concern*, at the thought of what has been amiss.

Natural Conscience *is soon silenc'd*, or *diverted* and made easy, by *hiding* or *forgetting* the Sin that troubled it: But the renewed Conscience, when under a Sense of *Guilt*, is like the *Eye* when it has got a *Mote* in it; *restless*, and rolling itself to and fro', and *watering* till it has wept it out; never *quiet* till it has some Hope of a *renewed Pardon*.

But this, however, is to be observ'd; that even the renewed Conscience is not *equally* impressive in all *Persons*; nor in the same Person at all *Times*. Those that are of *bold* and *dispassionate* Tempers are not impress'd to such a degree, as those that are *timorous* and of *quick Passions*; Nor does a good Man, when under Desertion, or in the Ebbings of Grace, feel either so *soon*, or so *much*, as at other times, when he has offended. Nevertheless, where a Man is become a *new Creature*, I think it may be discovered, by the *Impressiveness* of his Conscience, *more* or *less*, in all the foregoing respects.

6. *The*

6. *The Affections of him that is Born again, are prevailingly Spiritual and Heavenly.*

I ſay *prevailingly* Spiritual, becauſe there are in the *beſt* of Men, very great Mixtures of ſenſual worldly *Affections* and *Paſſions*. And there is a very wide *Difference*, amongſt thoſe that may be accounted good People, in the *Exerciſe* of theſe.

Some have gained a *generous Contempt* of every thing in this World; and, with *ardent Deſires*, are continually preſſing forward, toward the amiable Manſions of the Saints above: Whilſt others are *caring* and *contriving* about the preſent Life; and making, what they think *needful Proviſion*, for future Years. Some there are, who can freely and chearfully devote their *Subſtance*, and their *Time*, to any religious *Service* and *Occaſion*; whilſt others are perpetually acting what they call the *cautious* and the *wary* Part; and are too apt to *over-value* their outward Eaſe and Enjoyments. Some behave themſelves, as if they had no other Objects of their *Hatred*, and *Averſion*, and *Shame*, and *Anger*, but Sin and Folly; whilſt others find a *thouſand things*, to provoke theſe ſeveral *Paſſions* in them. Some there are whoſe *Joys* and *Comforts*, in the Ways

of GOD, do greatly abound; others ſeem to be Perſons of *ſad* and *ſorrowful* Spirits. Some have a mighty *Zeal* for Religion, and the Intereſt of CHRIST in the World; others are more *calm* and *ſilent*, and contracted in their Views of things. Some have ſcarce *any Fear* of Calamities or Afflictions; others are in *perpetual Slavery* and Bondage through the *Fear* of *Death*, or *Poverty*, or ſome *approaching Evil*. So that very great Allowances are to be made, for different Capacities, Conſtitutions, and outward Circumſtances, when we look to the *Change* in our *Affections*, as an Evidence of our being Born again.

But, where any Man is become a *new Creature*, his Love, his Hatred, his Deſires, his Averſions, his Hopes, his Joys, his Anger, his Zeal, his Fears, his Sorrows, his Shame, his Comforts, his Cares, muſt all be exercis'd upon new and more deſerving *Objects*, or in a new and better *Manner* than they generally are in a *natural State*. In *this*, eſpecially, we ought to obſerve the *different Exerciſe* of them; That, whereas before they were *haſty*, *irregular*, and *impetuous*; after Renovation, they become more ſubject to *Reſtraint* and *good Government*.

Thus far you have an Account of the *inward Change* that is wrought by regenerating Grace. II. *There*

II. *There are other Evidences of the new Birth, in the outward Behaviour, and Converſation.*

By what is *outward* and more obvious, we may gain a fuller and ſurer Knowledge of what is *inward* and more liable to be miſtaken. The *following* Things ought therefore to be conſidered, with thoſe *foregoing*, before we paſs a deciſive and determinate Judgment upon ourſelves, as to our being in a Regenerate, or Unregenerate State. For certain it is, that if the *Temper*, *Underſtanding*, *Will*, *Conſcience* and *Affections* be renewed; both our Words, and Actions will be ſome way affected thereby: And that in ſuch Inſtances as theſe.

1. He that is Born again, *is careful to avoid, and to watch againſt, all Sin.*

St. *John* tells us in a Text before quoted, *He that is Born of* GOD *doth not commit Sin:* No, not of *any kind* ſo as to approve of it and continue in it. A regenerate Perſon hates and ſtrives againſt Sin, *as Sin:* That is, as a thing contrary to the Law of GOD, and diſpleaſing to him; and therefore he ſtrives againſt

every Sin; having the *ſame Reaſon*, to ſhew a Regard to the Commands and the Pleaſure of Almighty GOD, in *one* Inſtance, as in *another*.

Notwithſtanding natural Inclination, or any outward inviting Circumſtances; yet ſtill, the Language of a true Convert, to every Sollicitation that is ſinful, is like that of *Joſeph*; *How can I do this* or the other *Wickedneſs*, and *ſin againſt* GOD? Gen. xxxix. 9.

Again; Renewing Grace extends to a ſtriving againſt *ſecret Sins*, and ſuch as lie out of the View and Obſervation of others, as well as againſt publick Crimes and Scandals: And he that makes conſcience of theſe, fearing to offend or ſin againſt GOD, when *he only* is the Witneſs of what is done, has an undoubted Evidence of true Grace.

Farther; *regenerating Grace* will teach a Man to watch againſt thoſe very Sins that, through Corruption, may ariſe from Grace *it ſelf*: Such as ſpiritual *Pride*, and *Security*. By this we are directed to ſubdue all *Conceit* of our ſelves, and *Contempt* of others, to which our ſpiritual Attainments might prompt us. And we are alſo inſtructed not to grow *ſecure*, as if our Work was done, and we were out of danger, as ſoon as we find

a

a Change wrought in us. The more Grace prevails, the more ſenſible will it make us of our being *unprofitable Servants.*

Nay, what is ſtill more; a Principle of Grace will make us watchful againſt the very *Occaſions*, and *Opportunities* of ſinning. This will put *Inſtances*, and particular *Meanings*, to that general Petition,——*Lead us not into Temptation.* And it will teach us to *walk* and *act* circumſpectly; ſo as that our *Lives*, and our *Prayers*, may agree, and not contradict one another.

2. He that is Born again, *has a conſtant Regard to every Duty.*

A Principle of Divine Life will not ſuffer a Man to reſt in *negative Goodneſs*; but will put him upon ſhewing a due Reſpect to every *poſitive Command* and Inſtitution of the Goſpel.

The *new Birth* introduces a Man into a moſt *buſy Life:* It ſhews him a great deal neceſſary to be done, which before he was a Stranger to. He that had his frequent Returns of idle and unemployed Hours; now ſees Work enough for every Hour and Moment of his Life. And he grudges much of that Time that is ſpent in repairing the Strength, and ſe-

curing the Health and good Temperament of the Body, or in attending to its Diſorders.

He that has a thorough Senſe of Religion, will devote ſome part of his time to the Service of his GOD, and the Improvement of his *Mind*; and ſome alſo, to the Service of his *Neighbour*, and his *Relatives:* Which, together with the minding of his worldly Affairs, muſt keep him conſtantly employ'd. There are *many* Duties, both *ſecret* and *ſocial*, with reference to GOD and *Man*, of which we are inſenſible, till we are inſtructed in them, and urg'd to the performance of them, by the renewing Influences of a divine SPIRIT. This unfolds a vaſt Scheme of things, wrapt up in ſuch a Summary of Religion, as that, —*What doth the* LORD *require of thee, but to do juſtly*, and to *love Mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy* GOD? Micah vi. 8.

He that is born again, looks, without exception or reſerve, to the Duties of both *Tables*; and to thoſe of all *Relations:* Not contenting himſelf, in what is low and common; but endeavouring, that his good Works may

Matth. v. 16. *ſo ſhine before Men, as that they may* be induced in like manner *to glorify his Father which is in Heaven.*

And

And then, he is careful to *hold on* in the Way of his Duty, whatever Trials and Oppoſitions he may meet with; excepting in ſuch Caſes, as diſable him from attending to it.

Thus, allowing for unavoidable Infirmities, and Surprizes, (which the beſt of Men are ſubject to,) the *general Behavionr* of him that is renewed, will ſhew that he is *ſo*.

3. He that is Born again, *is particularly careful of his Words.*

As they are undoubtedly in a bad State, who ſay with thoſe in the xii^th^ Pſalm, *With our Tongue will we prevail, our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* So on the contrary we are ſure of the good State of all them, that are concerned to *govern* their Lips, and to order their Words aright. According to St. *James, If any Man offend not in Word, the ſame is a perfect Man, and able alſo to bridle the whole Body.* Chap. iii. 2.

Renewing Grace will teach a Man to take heed that he *ſin not with his Tongue*; but rather to lay *abſolute Reſtraints* upon himſelf, and *keep his Mouth as with a Bridle*, when he is in Company that might Pſal. xxxix. 1.

provoke him to offend. And even at Times when he allows himſelf the *greateſt Freedom* and Liberty of Converſation, he is yet ſtrictly obſervant of the Rules of Decency, Sobriety, and Religion.

He is careful not to blaſpheme, or trifle with, the Name of GOD; or to make a *Jeſt* of any thing that is *ſacred*. He will not talk lightly and unconcernedly of any *Immorality*, or make a *Mock of Sin*. He is careful not to injure his *abſent* Neighbour; nor to provoke the Paſſions, and Reſentments, of him that's *preſent*. His Converſation is guarded againſt every thing that is *immodeſt*, *unjuſt*, *lying*, or *diſcontented*: And, whatever may come under the Notion of that *fooliſh Talking* and *Jeſting*, *which are not convenient*, he is ſtudious to avoid.

Eph. v. 4.

Farther; the Converſation of a good Man is not only harmleſs and inoffenſive, but it is *ſerious* and *religious* too. Upon all proper Occaſions, he loves to be talking of the beſt Things, and telling what GOD has done for him: *Come and hear, all ye that fear* GOD, *and I will declare*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *what he hath done for my Soul*. He loves to be converſing with his Fellow-Travellers, of the

Pſal. lxvi. 19.

Place

Place they are going to, and the *Way* that lies before them: And, if at any time he forbears ſuch Diſcourſe when in good Company, it is either, becauſe he finds the Thoughts of thoſe he is with turn'd another way; or, becauſe he ſuſpects his own Ability; or, becauſe he thinks ſome other Seaſon may give greater Force to what he would ſuggeſt: But ſtill, in the Frame and Temper of his Mind, he is always ſet towards Heaven, and heavenly Things; and it is as *eaſy* and *familiar* to him that is Born from above, to converſe of what is *Spiritual*, as for thoſe that are born only of the Fleſh, to talk of what they ſhall *eat* and *drink* and *put on*, and of what occurs daily to their Senſes.

4. He that is Born again, *will manage every common Action, and worldly Affair, ſo as to ſerve a religious End and Purpoſe.*

Saving Grace will cure, that otherwiſe incurable Evil, a *worldly Selfiſhneſs*; and will teach us to prefer the Good of our *Souls*, before the Eaſe or Gratification of our *Bodies*; and the Intereſt of JESUS CHRIST, before our *own Concerns* and *Intereſt*; and ſo, to bring every Affair and Buſineſs in *this* World, into an entire

tire Subſerviency to our Hopes and Expectations in the World *to come.*

He, that has been brought up to any *honeſt Employment*, is not required, upon his becoming a *new Creature*, to *quit* his Calling; and retire from his Station, into a *Monaſtery*, or a *Deſart:* 'Tis ſufficient that he acts upon *new Principles*, and with *new Ends* and Deſigns, in his purſuit of ſuch an Employment. He is diligent in Buſineſs, not from a *covetous* or *ambitious* Aim of enriching himſelf; but from a *conſcientious Regard* to the Command and Appointment of GOD; who has made it every Man's Duty to *labour*, and to employ himſelf one way or other, ſo as to be *uſeful* in the World. Nor is it ſo much the *Fear* of *Want*, that excites the Induſtry of a good Man, as a Deſire to have ſomething that may enable him to be *friendly* and *charitable*, to thoſe about him; to have ſomething *to give to him that needeth*, Eph. iv. 28.

He, that is poſſeſs'd of a large Eſtate, is not oblig'd to *give it up* when he becomes a true Convert; but only to *manage* it ſo, as to render both his Subſtance, and his Intereſt, and his Time, and his Abilities, as far as he can, ſerviceable to the promoting of Religion, and the

the Welfare of others in the World: And wherever a Principle of divine Life has been infus'd into the Soul, it will teach a Man to *conſecrate* all he can to ſuch Purpoſes.

If a Man that is renewed, gives up himſelf to any Acts of Friendſhip and Hoſpitality, entertaining others and converſing with them, it is not to gratify a brutiſh Senſuality; but to ſhew a kind Diſpoſition, to ſettle a good Acquaintance, by mutual Services to advance each other's Welfare, and to join their Thoughts and Endeavours upon every Occaſion wherein they are equally concerned.

Once more; he that is inwardly and prevailingly religious, will manage all Recreations and Exerciſes for the Health of his Body, and all his neceſſary Refreſhments, ſo as to render him more fit for the Duties of his Station, and the Service of his GOD. In the *Apoſtle*'s Language, *whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all to the Glory of* GOD, 1 Cor. x. 31.

5. The laſt Evidence I ſhall mention of a Perſon's being Born again, as it appears in the Behaviour and outward Actions, is, *an abounding in all proper Inſtances*

ces of Love and Charity toward his Brother.

St. *John* tells us expreſly, 1 John iii. 10. *that he who loveth not his Brother, is not of* God. And this is argued in a following Chapter, from its being the Commandment of God, to *love our Brethren*, as well *as to love himſelf*; and no Man can have a due Regard to the one, but he muſt alſo obſerve the other. This Love, we are elſewhere told, muſt not be in *Word or in Tongue* only, *but in Deed* and *in Truth*: That is, our Actions muſt be ſuch as may truly contribute to the Advantage and Benefit of our Brother.

That, which in a natural State is the Cauſe of Men's acting *injuriouſly* toward their Neighbours, (I mean *Self-Love*;) renewing Grace will make the Rule and Motive of *doing good* to them. This will explain and enforce that Command, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

Self-Love, we ſee generally, provokes Men to Strife and Contention; defaming others, to raiſe their own Reputation; defrauding others, to increaſe their own Gains; and, in almoſt every Caſe, not regarding what hurt is done to others, ſo that it make for their own advantage. Whereas, if you look to one

that

that is under the Influence of divine Grace, the *Love* that he has to *himſelf*, puts him upon all proper Ways of ſhewing a Concern for the *Peace*, *good Name*, and *Proſperity* of his *Neighbour*: And the more he finds in *himſelf* a Deſire of this or the other comfortable Enjoyment, the more will he *do*, in ſuch reſpects, for the Help and Relief of *others*.

As to that grand Branch of Charity, *Almſgiving*, it is obſervable in the Account of *Zaccheus*'s Converſion, that *Salvation* was no ſooner *come to his Houſe*, but he preſently ſays, *Behold*, LORD, *the half of my Goods I give to the Poor*, &c. Luke xix. 8. The Contributions *then*, indeed, were *extraordinary*; and the Caſe of *Zaccheus* might make it eſpecially requiſite, that *his* ſhould be *ſo*; but *every* Man that is brought into a State of Grace, will think it his Duty to conſecrate *ſome Proportion* of what he has to pious and charitable Uſes. For, let Men pretend to what they will, you always find that their *Expences* follow their prevailing *Affections*: What they have the greateſt *Love* and *Liking to*, they are moſt ready to *ſpend upon*. So that if a Man be ſavingly changed and *renewed* in his *Temper* and *Affections*, it will appear from his *religious Expences*, as well

well as from the other Actions of his Life.

And now, I think, nothing more needs to be added for the enabling us to judge of our ſelves, whether we are *born again*, or not.

But I am ſenſible theſe Evidences of a Man's being in a good State, are like to meet with a very different *Reception* from different *Perſons*.

Some have found out Ways to keep themſelves eaſy, and to hope well as to their future Condition, where their *Lives* and *Tempers* are quite contrary to what I have been deſcribing. *Others* will only *pick out*, here and there, an *Evidence* that beſt pleaſes them; and whilſt they drop many things that are requiſite to their being thoroughly changed and renewed, are yet *preſumptuous* enough to rely upon ſome *few Inſtances* which they may produce, in their own Spirits or Behaviour. A *third* Sort of People there are, who imagine they ſhall *never come up* to ſuch a State as has been deſcribed; and therefore cannot obtain any *compoſed ſatisfying* Thoughts of their own Condition. Whilſt ſome *few* may poſſibly diſcover in themſelves, *all the Marks* and Evi-

dences of the new Birth, that are here ſet before them.

I ſhall therefore conclude the whole, in APPLYING myſelf, briefly, to each of theſe.

1. I would ſpeak a little to them *that are at eaſe, and willing to think their State good, altho' their Tempers and their Lives are quite contrary to what I have been deſcribing.*

I heartily wiſh ſuch Perſons would take Time to conſider,— what their Eaſe, and good Opinion of themſelves, is *owing to.* If you keep yourſelves eaſy by declining and neglecting all ſerious Enquiries about your State, 'tis certainly *bad*; and the *leſs* you are concerned about it, and acquainted with it, the *worſe* it is. You may read the *Doom* of ſuch as have *no Underſtanding*, nor ſerious Attention to things of this nature, in *Iſa.* xxvii. 11. *For it is a People of no underſtanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will ſhew them no favour.* No Man in his Wits can think, that the Caſe of a condemned Malefactor is *good*, becauſe he does *not attend* to his Sentence of Condemnation; or that a Perſon, who is languiſhing

well as from the other Actions of his Life.

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guiſhing under a *mortal* Diſtemper, is *well*, becauſe he will not be *perſuaded* that he is in a dangerous Condition.

But farther; though you may not have been altogether thoughtleſs, yet if you have conſidered Matters only ſo far as to take up ſome *general Notions* of the *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* of GOD, that may ſerve to make you eaſy in your Sins, without engaging you to *forſake* them and *repent* of them; you will then fall under that dreadful Sentence in *Deut.* xxix. 19, 20. He who thus *bleſſeth himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt*; (and ſo of any other Sin that is lived in;) *the* LORD *will not ſpare him, but then the Anger of the* LORD *and his Jealouſy ſhall ſmoak againſt that Man*; [being the more provoked by his *preſuming* on that Goodneſs which he deſpiſes;] *and all the Curſes that are written in this Book, ſhall lie upon him, and the* LORD *ſhall blot out his Name*, (notwithſtanding all his Confidence,) *from under Heaven.*

Once more; if you have thought on ſuch Repreſentations of the Chriſtian's Happineſs, and the Chriſtian's Character, as thoſe before laid down, with *Averſion* and *Deteſtation*; your Caſe is deplorable

ble indeed. I have heard of a *profane Wretch*, that ſaid, "if Heaven was filled "with ſuch Company, as thoſe that are "*called Saints* here on Earth, he would "never *deſire to come there.*" But canſt thou, Man! ſo eaſily give up the Thoughts of *Heaven?* And be willing, inſtead of going thither, to lie down in *devouring Flames? Think well*, I beſeech thee! before thou renounceſt the Character, and the Company of the *Saints*. If thy Soul is not gathered with *theirs*, it muſt be a Companion of *Devils*: There is no living any more, *between* Heaven and Hell, when once thou art gone out of *this World*. Thy *ſenſual* Delights will all be loſt for ever; and leave thee under the Torment of an *inſatiable Thirſt* after them. Thy *ſinful Companions* will then increaſe thy Miſery; and thy own *Conſcience* will inceſſantly reproach thee for thy preſent Folly. Then, with *ſhowry* Eyes, and with an *aking* Heart, thou wilt look to the beauteous Regions of *Light* and *Love*; where thou mighteſt have had a Place; but from which, thou art now condemned to an eternal Baniſhment. O *that thou* wouldſt know, *in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace!*

2. I would next ſay ſomething to them *that are content, in being able to find out in themſelves* ſome few *of the foregoing Evidences, when at the ſame time* many things *are yet wanting to their being* ſavingly *renewed.*

If there be juſt Reaſon for your attending to Religion *at all*, the ſame Reaſon there is for your making *thorough Work* in it: Becauſe, without this, our pretending to be religious will avail us nothing. He that profeſſes to *keep the Law*, or expects to be ſaved by the *Goſpel*, and yet ſtatedly *offends* either by Omiſſions or Commiſſions in *one Point*, will be condemned as certainly, as if he had been *guilty of all.*

James ii. 10.

Some Men are apt to think well of themſelves for the ſake of their *inward Piety*; in which they apprehend they exceed many, that make a greater *Shew of Goodneſs* in their Converſation and Behaviour. Others judge of themſelves, by their *outward Profeſſion*; and take up a good Opinion of themſelves, becauſe they have *a Name to live*; although in ſecret, and in their Spirits, they are very much eſtranged from GOD, and the Exerciſes of Religion. The firſt of theſe, by pretending to have *good Hearts*, may deceive

themſelves; and the latter, by taking care to preſerve a *good Name*, may deceive their Neighbours: but neither the *one*, nor the *other*, can deceive or impoſe upon an omniſcient GOD. We muſt *be tranſformed*, by *the renewing of* our *Minds*; and we muſt *be holy*, alſo, *in all manner of Converſation*; if we would be *acceptable* in the ſight of GOD. Rom. xii. 2. 1 Pet. i. 15.

Farther, there are ſome Perſons that glory in the *Church* they are of, and in *Acts* of *Devotion* towards GOD; as if they needed no more, to prove they are in a good State: Whilſt others boaſt of their being *juſt* and *charitable*, and obſerving their Duty toward their *Neighbour*; as if this *alone* was ſufficient to ſave them. Whereas, if he that frequents the Places of Divine Worſhip, lives in *Enmity* and *Hatred* to his *Brother*; or in *Covetouſneſs*, *which is Idolatry*; or in any *other Sin* againſt the Precepts of the *ſecond Table*, CHRIST has expreſly diſowned ſuch. And, if he that is abounding in all Expreſſions of Love to his Neighbour, does yet *reſtrain Prayer before* GOD, and neglect the giving him that *Honour* which is *due unto his Name*; he ſtands condemned as a Deſpiſer Matt. xxii. 37.

ſpiſer of the firſt and great Command-ment, both of the *Old* and *New Teſta-ment.*

In theſe, and ſuch like Inſtances, Men would have us *diſpenſe* with the Marks and Evidences of true Grace, that we may ſuit their ſeveral *Diſpoſitions* and *Attain-ments.* But, however it may be for the Intereſt of the Leaders of Parties, to miſ-lead their Followers; and however it may ſuit the Inclinations of ſome eaſy-temper'd Men, to oblige *them* that they have a re-ſpect for; yet neither will the Repreſen-tations of one, nor another, be of any ſignificancy, where they *pervert* or *diſ-ſemble* the Scripture-Account of Things: *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed*, ſays the *Pſal-miſt*, *when I have reſpect unto* All *thy Commandments*, Pſal. cxix. 6.

3. It may be proper to hint a few things to them *that are ſavingly renewed, but yet are uneaſy and perplex'd about their State and Condition, becauſe they cannot diſcover all the aforementioned Evidences in themſelves.*

It is no unuſual thing to meet with ſuch, as in the Judgment of thoſe that are *acquainted* with them, may be e-ſteemed *truly Religious*; who yet labour under ſo many *Doubts* and *Diſcourage-ments*

ments in their own Spirits; that they cannot diſcern any thing that ſhall give Satisfaction *to themſelves.* To ſuch, I would recommend the *following* Conſiderations: Which I beg they would take Time farther to enlarge upon, and to apply to their own Caſe and Circumſtances.

Thoſe that have but *lately* been under ſerious Impreſſions, muſt make great Allowances for the *Weakneſs* of Grace in its firſt Beginnings. Tho' they have not that clear and full *Knowledge* of Divine Things which they deſire; nor that *Government* of their Paſſions and Tempers; nor that Raiſedneſs and Spirituality of their *Affections*, which ſome have attained to; yet, ſo long as they are *ſincerely endeavouring* to gain all this, and are attending to the proper appointed *Means* of their doing ſo, they have abundance of reaſon to hope well of themſelves.

Again; thoſe that are under any Darkneſs and Diſorder, by the *breaking out* of ſome *one Sin*, that appears grievous and tormenting to them, muſt not expect to obtain a thorough Compoſedneſs of Mind, or any ſettled Eaſe and Peace of Conſcience, till that is *ſincerely repented* of. A Senſe of Guilt, in *one* Inſtance, will daſh *all* other *Evidences*, how great and conſiderable ſoever they may ſeem in the

eyes of those that are acquainted with us.

Farther; there may not be a suitable Sense of our *Dependance* upon the SPIRIT of GOD; and so, for a while, Persons may be under Confusion and Mistakes; hereby, to lead them to honour the SPIRIT, as they honour the FATHER, and the SON, in the great Work of their Conversion and Regeneration. By our first awful Apprehensions of GOD, and Approaches to him, in our *being born again*, we honour the FATHER: By our earnest Addresses to JESUS CHRIST, and seeking for the Favour and Acceptance of GOD, *in* and *thro' him*, we honour the SON: But then we must be brought to a direct Application of our selves to the HOLY SPIRIT; that he may shew us how far this and the other Evidence of Grace belongs to *ourselves*; and may assist us, in forming a right Judgment thereupon: And when we are once duly affected with a Sense of his doing *this* for us, we then honour the SPIRIT, as our *Sanctifier* and *Comforter*. But I am perswaded, a great deal of the Perplexity of good People, is owing to their want of regular Thoughts in this matter.

Sometimes, Allowances must be made for *bodily Distempers*; and for *pressing Calamities*

Calamities in the World; and for a *Weakneſs* of *Underſtanding*, and natural Abilities; and for ſome *evil Reports*, or *ill Carriage* of thoſe about us; any of which may very much diſorder our *Imaginations*, and obſcure every Evidence that might afford Comfort to us.

But, theſe Things being duly obſerved, ſuch Evidences as thoſe before laid down, ought ſtill to be inſiſted on: And we ſhould give *all Diligence*, to make this Point ſure.

THE LAST Sort of Perſons I would addreſs my ſelf to, *are thoſe, that have been able to diſcover in themſelves the Marks of their being Born again, ſo as to be ſatisfied therewith.*

There is not a Privilege of which human Nature is capable, that can ſo much deſerve to be gloried in, as this, That we are the *Children of* GOD. To be his Children by *Adoption*, is to have a Right to his Kingdom, being *Heirs* and *joint Heirs with* CHRIST JESUS. Rom. viii. 17. And to be made Children by *Regeneration*, is to be *Partakers of the Divine Nature*. 2 Pet. i. 14. And ſhall we not think *this* matter of Glory?

Let us however take care, while we rejoice in our Privilege, that we do not forget our Duty. Let us *be Followers of* GOD *as dear Children*; imitating his *Perfections*; and endeavouring to *ſhew forth his Praiſes*, and Excellencies, to all that behold us.

Epheſ. v. 1.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

A Senſe of our being *Born again*, ſhould encourage us to bear up againſt the *Hatred and Contempt* of the World. *If ye were of the World*, ſays our SAVIOUR, *the World would love its own*; *but now I have choſen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* John xv. 19.

Yea, this ſhould ſupport us under all *kind of Afflictions.* If I am *created anew* in CHRIST JESUS, I may certainly conclude, God will not *forſake* this *Work of his own Hands.* Thoſe that are *born from above*, muſt expect *Diſcipline* and *Correction* from thence, till they have gone thro' this State of *Education:* But they may humbly hope, that he who has *begun* a good Work in them, will *perfect* it; and ſo bring *them to their Father's Houſe, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

To add no more; This, ſhould make us think continually, of that *State* and *World*

World to which we are *born.* And when we have thought the *fartheſt*, ſtill we muſt remember, that whilſt we are here in our *Minority*, we think as *Children*, and expreſs ourſelves as *ſuch*; but when we ſhall arrive at the full Stature, and perfect Knowledge of the *Heavenly Inhabitants*, our preſent weak and imperfect Senſe of Things will be *done away.*

Now are we the Sons of GOD; 1 John iii. 2.
and it doth not yet appear
what we ſhall be: But we know that when
he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we
ſhall ſee him as he is.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

DUTY and ADVANTAGE

OF

SINGULAR PIETY.

EXOD. XXIII. 2.

Thou ſhalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil——

THE Diſorder of the Times calls for the moſt earneſt preſſing of ſuch Admonitions and Warnings as this: For if we are now *Followers* of a *Multitude*, and are govern'd by the Generality of thoſe among

among whom we live, we ſhall be carried into *all manner* of Evils, and be taught to make light even of the higheſt *Degree* of Iniquity.

Theſe Words are to be look'd upon as a *general Rule* for our Conduct and Behaviour, at all Times, and in all Caſes whatſoever. We muſt *not follow a Multitude to do Evil* in any Caſe. This Rule is indeed applied in the Context, to a particular Caſe which *Moſes* then had in his eye; of which ſome notice may be taken, in conſidering the Import of this Caution. But it is certain, we are as much obliged to abſtain from *one* Sin as *another*; and therefore, that the Example of a Multitude is no more to be follow'd in *any thing* that is Evil, than in *thoſe things*, that are mentioned as Inſtances in the beginning of this *Chapter*.

With this general View, I ſhall now ſet myſelf, I. To conſider the Meaning, and the juſt Senſe of this Rule or Caution. II. To enforce it, and preſs the Obſervance of it by ſome proper Arguments. III. Conclude with ſome Inferences from the whole.

I. *Let us conſider the proper Senſe and Meaning of this Caution, Thou ſhalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil.*

The *Hebrew* is only, *to Evil*; and it may alſo be read, Thou ſhalt not follow a Multitude of *evil Perſons, or evil Doers.* A Rule this is, much eaſier to be underſtood, than practis'd; but it is very neceſſary the following things ſhould be well weigh'd, in our ſtating of this Caution, that we do not *imagine* Evil where there is *none*; and ſo, by refuſing to do as others do, make ourſelves remarkable, and pointed at, when there is no need for it.

1. We are not hereby required to *ſeparate from evil Doers,* in any thing which they do *as Men.*

We are not required to become ſtupid as to the common Occurrences of Life, and to take every thing like *Statues.* Nor is it expected that we ſhould ſubſiſt and act in the World, as thoſe that have no bodily Wants, or Inclinations, and ſo live like *Angels.* But in all thoſe things which are common to Human Nature; ſuch as eating, drinking, ſleeping, converſing, and making proper Proviſion for ourſelves, and thoſe that are dependent on us; in theſe and ſuch like things,

(I

(I ſay) we are to do as others do, and not to break off from the Bulk of Mankind. Wherein I ſee others *abuſe* themſelves, or their Neighbours, I muſt ſeparate from them; but otherwiſe, I am to take care of my outward Safety, my Comfort, my Subſtance, and my Relatives according to the Fleſh, even as thoſe may do, that in other reſpects are very ill Men. In ſhort, becauſe I ſee bad Men ſometimes *exceeding tender* of their own Concerns, I muſt not therefore be *neglectful* of mine, under pretence of not following a Multitude of evil Doers.

2. We are not hereby required to *act contrary* to the Generality in *Matters political*, and that tend to the *Welfare of States and Kingdoms.*

If an immoral Man makes a good Magiſtrate, and a Majority of ſuch as himſelf ſhould be advanced, and employed in all publick Affairs; we are not encouraged by this, or any other Precept in the Word of GOD, to withdraw from ſuch Societies; or to break in upon any civil Cuſtoms and Agreements. Much leſs ſhould Men become turbulent and ſeditious (as the manner of many is) under a pretence of ſerving the *Church*, or promoting the Schemes of thoſe, who pre-

tend that every thing they teach muſt be obſerved as ſacred. Religion was never intended to ſpirit Men up to Rebellion: But whatever would have been *neceſſary* to the Intereſt and Order of the civil Goverment, purely as ſuch, if we had continu'd in the State of *Heathens*, is now doubly enforc'd by profeſſing ourſelves *Chriſtians*. And therefore in Matters merely political, we are to fall in with thoſe, that are ſeeking the common Proſperity and Peace of the Places where we live; tho', in other Parts of their Conduct, it may be our Duty not to follow them.

3. This Caution does not forbid our falling in with the *common Principles* and *Sentiments* of ill Men, *in ſome Points of* Religion.

It was the Saying of a great Man, "That he believ'd the beſt of Men had "more in them that was bad, and the "worſt of Men had more in them that "was good, than the World was gene-"rally aware of." It would tend much more to the reforming of a corrupt Age, as well as to the bettering of our own Conduct, to be duly ſenſible of this. I muſt not follow a Multitude, when I ſee them *act unſuitably* to their acknowledg'd Principles

Principles and Sentiments; but then I ſhould take care that I do not fall out with them on any of thoſe Heads, wherein they retain a Senſe of Things *commonly believ'd* in the Chriſtian World. The Apoſtle *Paul* has taught us admirably to diſhinguiſh in this matter, when he was anſwering the Accuſations of *Tertullus*, Acts xxiv. 14, 15. *This I confeſs to thee* (Felix) *that after the Way which they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I the* GOD *of my Fathers.* In the manner of Worſhip I cannot, I muſt not, do as they do; but I ſhall not affect ſuch an Oppoſition to them, as to renounce any thing which is right and good, or to believe otherwiſe than what I have received in common with them. *I believe all things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets; and I have Hope toward God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt.* We ſhould not affect to think *by our ſelves*, in any of thoſe things that may be rightly conceiv'd of by the Generality.

4. We are not forbidden to follow a Multitude even in ſome Compliances with their *prevailing Humours*, when *greater Matters* receive no *Prejudice* thereby.

'Tis one of those Rules, which, as Christians, we ought to observe: *Let every one of us please his Neighbour, for his Good, to Edification*, Rom. xv. 2. In common Salutations, and Intercourses of Civility; in the common Ways of Dress, and Use of Apparel; in the generally esteem'd Decencies of Conversation, and in whatever else may secure to us a common Respect, we ought rather to fall in with Custom, than to aim at the distinguishing ourselves; only take care, that Religion and our Souls be not injur'd thereby. But then,

5. Whatever is in *itself* sinful, or appears so *to us*, must be avoided, tho' we go against *ever so great a Multitude* in our Conduct or Opinions.

We owe more to the Authority of God, and the Dictates of our own *Consciences*, than to all the World. When, therefore, we see any Command of God violated or disregarded; when we are sensible that we could not live as the greater Part of the World do, but we must be self-condemned; we are by no means to run with a Croud, or take our Measures from a Number of Transgressors.

The foregoing Particulars I mention'd, as what might lead us to judge betwixt

lawful

lawful and *ſinful* Compliances. And the more careful we are, not to call thoſe things *evil*, which may be *good*, or *allowable*, in our complying with a Multitude; the more firmly reſolved and ſettled ſhall we be, in our oppoſing or withdrawing from them, when they would lead us into any thing that is *really ſinful*.

We ſhould not follow a Multitude in any *one ill Action*. Much more ſhould we take care, not to follow them in a *Courſe of Sin*, and ſo as to *continue* in things that are evil. The particular Sins we are warn'd againſt in the Context, are ſuch as theſe: Raiſing or ſpreading *falſe Reports*; joining with *perjur'd* and unrighteous Men; being over-ruled by a Majority, to *wreſt Judgment* in Courts of Judicature; laying more ſtreſs upon ſome Circumſtances that may move *Pity*, than upon the *ſtated Rules* and Meaſures of *Juſtice*; taking of Gifts, or Bribes, which are apt to over-rule and biaſs the Judgment even of wiſe Men themſelves. Theſe are the things, in which *Moſes* obliges the *Iſraelites* not to follow a Multitude. And, as he ſays, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak in a Cauſe to decline after many to wreſt Judgment*; ſo it might alſo be added, Thou ſhalt not blaſpheme the Name of GOD by pro-

Ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 3. 8.

phane

phane *Swearing* or *Curſing*; thou ſhalt not deſpiſe his *Worſhip*, pollute his *Sabbaths* or his *Sanctuary*, and the like; however general and prevailing ſuch Evils may be. Thus a Multitude ſhould not draw us, ſo much as to a ſingle Tranſgreſſion, if it may be avoided.

But we ſhould take care, eſpecially, that we be not carried away in a *continued Courſe* of ſuch Immoralities. What the *Apoſtle* ſays to them who liv'd among *Idolaters*, may be apply'd to all ſuch as live among thoſe that are *Lovers* and *Workers* of any Iniquity; *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate*, 2 Cor. vi. 17.

6. In Caſes where a Man is directed *not to follow a Multitude*, he ſtands obliged *to obſerve* this Direction againſt *all Conſiderations whatſoever*.

Common Fame, worldly Profit, Gratification of Fleſh and Blood in Eaſe or Pleaſure, muſt all be renounced, rather than fall in with the Vices and Corruptions of any Age, or Set of Men.

The *Numbers* of thoſe that are corrupted, tho' never ſo *great*, ſhould not prevail upon us. When a Vice is general and epidemical, the Temptations to it will be ſo frequent, various, and on all hands repeated,

peated, that a good Man may ſometimes be *enſnared* before he is aware: But he will not think it a ſufficient Reaſon to *juſtify* an ill Action, nor will he dare from hence to perſiſt in an evil Way,—That he can plead *it is the Sin of Multitudes*, and that all about him are as bad or worſe than himſelf.

Again: The *Wealth*, and *High Stations* of Evil Doers ſhould not give them any power over us. The *Hebrew* Word [*Rabbim*] tranſlated a Multitude in our Text, may be rendered *Honourable*, *Great*, and *Potent Men*. But even againſt *theſe*, a truly good Man will ſtand his ground. He will not be *aw'd* by their State and Grandeur; nor *frighted* by their Frowns and Diſpleaſure; no, nor brib'd by their greateſt Courteſies and Favours, to *approve* or *imitate* their Sins. Farther: Tho' we ſhould be ſet upon by thoſe that are our *intimate Acquaintance*, yet neither Relation, nor former Friendſhips, ſhould prevail upon us to do an ill thing.

Concerning *all theſe*, it muſt be added; That when we are required not to follow them in doing Evil, it is implied, that we ſhould neither follow their *Counſels*, nor their *Examples*.

We

We must not hearken to the *Counsels* of the Wicked, tho' numerous, or great, or near to us. *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not,* Prov. i. 10, &c. *Come, say they,* let us do this and that, to enrich ourselves; *to obtain precious Substance, to fill our Houses with Spoil.* When with fair Speeches, and cunning Insinuations, they would draw thee into Ways that are not good, *My Son, walk not thou with them, refrain thy Foot from their Path.*

But we should be yet more constantly watchful against the ill Influence of their *Examples.* When the Counsels and Reasonings of Sinners are once rejected with Sincerity and Resolution, we may perhaps be assaulted no more in *that Way.* But *Example* is an abiding, unwearied kind of Sollicitation; and has a strange power over us, as it draws by insensible and imperceptible degrees: And therefore, it will call for our continual Care, and require a double Zeal for our Duty, to withstand a Multitude of *evil Examples.* Thus much may serve for the explaining of this Rule, in the most general Acceptation of it; *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude of evil Doers.*

II. My

II. My next Buſineſs is *to enforce this*, and *preſs the Obſervance of it by ſome proper Arguments.*

1. Conſider, the *Sins* of a Multitude will not *excuſe* yours.

It cannot render our diſobeying any Command of God excuſable, to ſay we were encourag'd to it, tho' by a world of Precedents. For, however the *greateſt* of Crimes, through our dear Redeemer, may be pardon'd; yet the *leaſt* of Sins cannot make a Plea for itſelf, upon its being recommended by Millions of Examples. We may take this as a certain Maxim, *That nothing can excuſe what is ſinful.* Sinners may loſe their *Senſe* of the Evil and Odiouſneſs of Sin, by its becoming very common and familiar; but *Sin* does not loſe its *Nature*, nor does the *Law* of God loſe its Force and Truth, or remit its Threatnings on that account.

We are now, in ſo many Words, warned againſt ſinning with a Multitude: And ſurely it can never be imagin'd a way to obtain Favour, to ſay we did not *regard* ſuch a Warning. How far a *Heathen* may be excus'd, who has no better Inſtruction than the Cuſtoms of the Places, and Examples of the People where he is born; and what Favour may be

ſhewn

ſhewn to ſome particular Perſons, among thoſe that have been Strangers to Revelation, I ſhall not here ſtay to enquire: But moſt certain it is, that We, who are inform'd of the Degeneracy of Human Nature, and the Wickedneſs of the World; We, who are taught all along in the Scripture, that the *greater* part of Mankind are going on in the Ways of Sin and Death; We, that are commanded not to live as do others: that We, I ſay, ſhall never be able to plead the Sins of a Multitude, as any Excuſe for Ours. When our LORD would fortify his Diſciples againſt the Seducers they ſhould afterwards meet with, he makes uſe of this Argument, *Behold, I have told you before*, Mat. xxiv. 25. So in the preſent Caſe, it may certainly be inſiſted on, as that which ſhould make us avoid a Multitude of evil Doers, rather than make it an excuſe for following them, That it is *what we are told beforehand* we ſhould not do.

For we are farther aſſured, that if we *ſin* with the Multitude, we muſt *ſuffer* with them. We read, That *the Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the* NATIONS *that forget* GOD, Pſal. ix. 17. When GOD ſhall appear to take vengeance on the impious World, whole Nations and Kingdoms ſhall be overturned,

turned, and deſtroy'd by his conſuming Wrath: So that to ſin with Nations, will be no Security to us, when *all the Nations* that forget GOD ſhall be turned into *Hell.*

It frequently happens indeed, in this World, that the Multitude, and Quality of Offenders, may prevent the Puniſhment due to their Crimes: Or ſome of the Chief Leaders are executed, while others that were drawn in by their Sollicitations are pardon'd. But hereafter, when Almighty GOD ſhall come to judge the World by CHRIST JESUS, the greateſt of Sinners ſhall not eſcape, nor the meaneſt be paſs'd by. There ſhall then be no flying from Juſtice; no Arts of evading it; nor ſhall the combined Force of Earth, and Hell, be able to make any Reſiſtance. How inſignificant a Plea for Mercy will it then be, to urge the Examples of *thoſe* that ſhall be *condemned* before our eyes, and muſt *ſuffer* together with us? But ſome, perhaps, are weak enough to imagine, that if they periſh with a Multitude, it will be ſome Relief to 'em, to think they fare *no worſe* than the Generality of their Neighbours and Acquaintance do; and therefore let it be conſidered,

2. The

2. The *Torments* of a Multitude will not *leſſen* yours.

It will be no Comfort, in Hell, to find a Multitude there as miſerable as your ſelves. To hear Thouſands of Thouſands roaring, and crying out under the *ſame* Anguiſh, will no more relieve your Pain, than it would be an Eaſe to a Company of Perſons rack'd with the Cholic, Stone, Strangury, or the like Diſtempers, to be within the hearing of one another's Groans and Complaints.

'Tis true, to be in Poverty, Diſgrace or ſuch comparative Evils only, it mightily leſſens the Affliction, ſometimes quite takes away the Senſe of it, to have the Generality of one's Acquaintance in the ſame Circumſtances: But where any are under *violent* and *raging Pains*, there can be no Relief from Company.

Alas! the Sinner little thinks what *Hell* is, when he expects to be eaſed in that World of Torment, by looking to a Croud of Sufferers. There will be none of thoſe Amuſements and Diverſions, which *here* the Sinner calls in to his help and aſſiſtance, when under any Uneaſineſs. And if they could be procured, they would ſignify no more to him, than a Concert of Muſic, or a delicious Banquet, to a dying Man in his laſt

laſt Agonies and Conflicts. What can be ſuppoſed to render the Preſſures of that Vengeance *tolerable*, which has already *ſunk* ſo many Legions of Angels into the depths of Miſery! What can be done for one who is in ſuch a State, as to reject all Comfort, were it poſſible it ſhould be *offered*? Or what Relief can reach a Soul that is crying out, *My Wound is incurable, labour not to comfort me?*

All the Powers of Thought and Reflection will then prove our Tormentors. The Conſcience will be the chief Seat of Woe and Miſery; and is therefore compared to a *Worm that never dies.* Hence it is, that the Sufferings of a Multitude, inſtead of leſſening, will really *add* to your Torment; in all the bitter Reflections which they ſhall make upon *themſelves*, and occaſion in *you.* The deeply accented Sighs and Groans, with which they ſhall be continually recounting the Follies and Wickedneſs of their paſt Lives; the Cruelties that hereby they ſhall be provok'd to act upon themſelves; the piteous, heart-wounding Cries that ſhall pierce through your very Souls; and that weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth which ſhall be on every ſide; were enough to make you miſerable, tho' you had no ſuch painful Reflections in

your own Breasts. But then, to conceive of all this, as helping you only to think with more Severity upon *your self*; and exciting a Remembrance of every thing that shall give you Trouble; how can you imagine any Relief from such Company as this?

After all; that whereby the Company of the damned shall most torment one another, will be, by *charging their Ruin and Damnation* one upon another: And aggravating such Charges, with dismal Curses of the Day that ever they became acquainted, and the Times wherein they us'd to draw one another to Sin. This, this is all the comfort you will have, in *suffering* with a Multitude of evil Doers hereafter; and therefore this, one would think, should make you afraid of following them in their *Sins* at present. But,

3. It may, perhaps, farther prevail with you, to set the *Examples* of those that *do well*, against the Examples of a *Multitude that do evil.*

Think of such as have been remarkable for their Goodness in the *worst* of *Places*, and in the *most degenerate* Times. There is something so great and attractive in these Instances, that if you attend to 'em, they will raise an Emulation in you.

If

If we look back to the *firſt Ages* of the World, we read of an *Enoch*. A Man whoſe pious and ſingular Courſe of Life, or, as the Scripture expreſſes it, *Walking with* GOD, will keep up his Memory to all Ages. He made it his buſineſs to honour and *pleaſe* GOD, when others were degenerate and corrupted. Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.

Another Inſtance of the like nature is that of *Noah*, who was a *juſt* and *righteous Man*, *perfect* (or upright) *in his Generation*, *when the Earth was filled with Violence*, *aud all Fleſh had corrupted their Way*. Gen. vi. 9.

So was *Lot* likewiſe a bright Inſtance of ſingular Piety in *Sodom*. His *righteous Soul* did not only *abſtain from the Sins* of that place, but was *vexed with them from day to day*. Thus he obtained the Character of a *righteous* Man, even amidſt the moſt *defiling* Examples. 2 Pet. ii. 8.

Joſhua reſolved, that though he ſtood *alone* in the Profeſſion of Religion, and had few, or none to adhere to him; yet *as for him and his Houſe*, *they would ſerve the* LORD.

Elijah

Elijah ſtood up for God, when none durſt publickly own him. After the Idolatrous King of *Iſrael* had ſlain the Lord's Prophets, and had ſet up Idols, and planted Groves, and carried away the Hearts of the People, particularly threatning the Deſtruction of *Elijah* himſelf; yet this good and zealous Man was neither terrify'd by *Ahab*'s Threatnings, nor ſeduc'd by a Multitude of Idolaters, but with wondrous Courage and Succeſs, he was a Pleader for the true Worſhip of God, even in that dangerous Time.

And upon this Head we cannot overlook the Account of *Daniel*, *who when he knew that the Writing was ſigned*, [by which it was made not only the loſs of Preferment, but the being caſt into a *Den of Lions*, to ask any Petition of God or Man for thirty Days, excepting only of the King; when *Daniel*, I ſay, knew that *Darius* had made ſuch a *Decree* as this, yet he would not do as the Multitude did, for] *his Windows being open in his Chamber toward* Jeruſalem, *he kneeled upon his Knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his* God, *as he did aforetime.*

Dan. vi. 10.

And thus *ſome* good Men there have been, who have acted with this pious Bravery,

Bravery, from one Age to another, in the Teſtimony they have born againſt ſpreading Immoralities.

Let us now from theſe Inſtances argue with our ſelves. If we lived in ſuch a World as *Noah*; in ſuch a City as *Lot*; in ſuch Times and Circumſtances as *Elijah*, or *Daniel*; or of any of thoſe who have ſtood moſt *alone*, in their adhering to Truth and Goodneſs; we are obliged to do as they did: How much more then, ſhould we ſeparate from evil Doers, when we live in a City and Nation wherein we may have *Company* in ſo doing? And when we have no *Edict* or Law to hinder us from worſhipping GOD, but are allow'd, yea, required to join with them *that keep Holy Day?*

How unreaſonable is it to refuſe being *Companions of thoſe that fear* GOD, becauſe they are *few*, and deſpiſed; when it muſt be acknowledged that we ought to ſtand up as Witneſſes for GOD, tho' we *ſtood alone?*

4. Conſider farther, *The Honour and Happineſs* of ſuch as have thus *diſtinguiſh'd* themſelves by a *ſingular Piety*.

Enoch was as remarkable in the manner of his leaving the World, as his living in it. He that liv'd not a common

Life, died not a common Death; but was born over that Pit where other Mortals drop, by the Hand of him that took him. He was taken both Soul and Body immediately to Heaven, without passing thro' the Grave.

Noah that had own'd God in Times of general Corruption, was preserved by God in a Time of general Desolation. He that had been a Preacher of Righteousness when the World was delug'd with Wickedness, had an Ark prepared for him when the World was overflow'd with Water.

Angels were sent from Heaven to deliver *Lot* from those Judgments, which came upon the Place where he inhabited: Such were the Hands that snatch'd him away from an approaching Shower of Fire and Brimstone. Yea, so far did God regard his singular Piety as
Gen. xix. 22. to tell him, *That he could not do any thing till he was escaped.* And it is again observable, that God, who told *Abraham*, he would spare *five* Cities for the sake of *ten* righteous Persons [*Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, *Zeboim*, and *Zoar*] spared *one* of those Cities [*Zoar*] for the sake of *Lot* only.

What an Honour did God put upon *Joshua*, when he made him so great a Conqueror, and so happily instrumental

to ſettle the *Iſraelites* in the Land of *Canaan?*

How much greater ſtill was the Honour of *Elijah*, when God ſent one of Heaven's radiant Chariots to fetch him up thither? And own'd his well-enflamed Zeal for the true Service of his Maker, by tranſlating him in a fiery Pillar to the Manſions above?

How great was the Reſpect ſhewn to *Daniel*, when, in the Lion's Den he could ſay, That God *ſent his Angel, and ſhut the Lions Mouths, that they were not able to hurt him?* And how moving is it, when afterwards we read of an Angel coming expreſs from Heaven, to tell him that he was greatly beloved?

Singular Goodneſs on Earth, procures great Love in Heaven.

What honourable mention is made of thoſe *Few* in *Sardis*, that were not defiled with the common Pollutions? *Thou haſt a few Names, even in* Sardis, *that have not defiled their Garments, and they ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*, Revel. iii. 4.

God does in a particular manner *obſerve* and *eſteem*, and one way or other will *honour* that Piety which appears in *ill Places*. I am verily perſuaded, that none ever ſet themſelves to ſeek and

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ſerve GOD in *profane Families*, or among *evil Examples*, but they have been own'd and bleſs'd in an *extraordinary manner*.

All *wiſe* and *good Men* will be ſure to ſet a very high Value upon ſuch, where-ever they hear of them. And is it not better to have the good Word and the good Opinion of the venerable and wiſe, than of the vain and wanton World? Nay, I may venture to go ſo much farther, as to ſay, that ſingular Piety will command the Reſpect of *Thoſe*, who decline the Practice of it. The Generality of Mankind have ſomething within them, that forces a ſecret Admiration of good Men, tho' they care not to imitate them. And in fact, we find the Hiſtories and Records of all Ages, ſet very diſtinguiſhing Marks upon thoſe, who have appeared any thing extraordinary in the Love and Practice of Piety. Kings and Nobles, and Men of Wealth, may be flatter'd whilſt living; but when Prejudice is laid aſide, and Characters come to be drawn after Death, thoſe who have arriv'd at a degree of Piety, that could deſpiſe the Greatneſs, and reprove the Vices of the World, have been much more famous and honourable.

Hence it comes to paſs, that the Names of the ancient *Patriarchs* are ſo well

well known; when *Princes* that were their Cotemporaries, many of them never have been heard of. *Moſes*, who *deſpis'd* the Treaſures of *Egypt*, roſe to much greater Glory and Honour than the *King* that *poſſeſs'd* them. The *Jewiſh Prophets* are mention'd with much more Reſpect in their Records, than the Kings that boaſted of their Power to perſecute and deſtroy them.

Some few Names we have among the *Heathen*, of ſuch as have raiſed a mighty Reputation, by their ſingular Virtue.

But never was ſuch Contempt thrown upon the World, both in its Vices and Vanities, as by our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*. And what Kings or Emperors have ever obtain'd ſo honourable a Name as they? Thus it has been all along amongſt Chriſtians. Thoſe have been the Perſons moſt univerſally venerated, that could ſacrifice every thing in oppoſing the Wickedneſs and vain Religion of the World, and who at laſt died Martyrs to true Religion.

There is one Conſideration that methinks, ſhould prove a very powerful Excitement to *ſingular* Piety: Namely, that ſuch Degrees of Goodneſs as would hardly be taken notice of, amongſt a number of thoſe that are truly religious, yet

become highly *reputable* when they appear among a multitude of evil Examples. Thus a Star will appear with double Luſtre and Brightneſs, when it ſhines out *ſingly* in a dark and every-where-elſe clouded Sky; which at another Time may hardly be diſtinguiſhed, when a clear Night preſents all thoſe ſhining Orbs to our view. From all that has been ſaid we ſee, that ſingular Piety has very great Advantages as to this World; Living, Dying, and in the Memory after Death.

5. I ſhall add only this Conſideration more at preſent, *That ſuch Piety ſhall be amply and moſt glorioufly rewarded in a future State.*

Tho' the good Man ſhould now be driven into Obſcurity, and be treated as one not fit for the Friendſhip of his Neighbours; yet the Day is coming when he ſhall be approv'd and applauded before Angels and Men; and whilſt the Multitude he refus'd to follow, are doom'd to endleſs Miſery, he ſhall enter into everlaſting Joy. Then ſhall the aſſembled World behold thoſe, who were deſpiſed for their Singularity in Goodneſs, ſhining with diſtinguiſh'd Glory: And outſhining all earthly Splendor, to a Degree, that is not only beyond our Deſcription, but

but even beyond our moſt raiſed Conceptions.

My Soul labours under the Thought, when I attempt to form one, of the Amazement that will overſet thoſe Perſons, who ſhall ſee a Man once deſpiſed by them, as *troubleſome* or *inſignificant*, and as ſomething *out of the way* during their abode together here upon Earth, *now ſingled out* from among them to receive a Crown and a Kingdom.

Then will the Triumphs of that Grace be loudly publiſh'd, which, from the *loweſt* of Mankind, and perhaps from the moſt *unexpected Places* of the Earth, could raiſe a Soul to ſuch a Pitch of Holineſs and Greatneſs.

Then ſhall all thoſe Excellencies, and that real Worth which before lay hid, appear in the utmoſt Glory. And then will CHRIST ſay to them; "Ye are they "which have profeſſed my Name, when "many deſpiſed it, or were aſham'd of "it; ye are they which have followed "me, when multitudes were denying "me, and ſetting themſelves againſt me;" *Ye are they which have continued with me; and now I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*, Luke xxii. 29.

Let us but act *now*, as we ſhall wiſh we had done when *this Time comes*, and we ſhall then be effectually engaged *not to follow a multitude of* evil Doers.

III. I ſhall conclude with ſome *Inferences* from what has been ſaid.

1. From hence *we may take one neceſſary Part of the Character of a Chriſtian.* He is like his great Maſter, *Separate from Sinners.*

He is one that has a Mind too great to be born down by that common way of talking; *Shall we not live like our Neighbours, and do as we ſee others about us do in the World?* No; the truly good Man will venture to ſay, with a reſolute mind, but without ill humour, *I dare not live and act as the generality of Mankind content themſelves to do.* In things that are ſinful, I muſt not, will not follow the greateſt Multitude.

A *Stateſman* and a Lover of his Country may ſometimes appear very *conſiderable*, by making a Stand againſt a Majority that are betraying or invading the Rights of his Fellow-Subjects. A *Lawyer* may ſometimes raiſe a *Reputation* by maintaining a ſingular Opinion. A *Tradeſman*

man may ſometimes be *ſucceſsful* in oppoſing the common Meaſures of thoſe with whom he is concern'd. But above all, the *Singularity* of him that *fears* GOD, were it duly conſidered, would appear the *moſt honourable*, and the *brighteſt Part* of a Character. His Principle is the nobleſt, his Behaviour attended with the greateſt Difficulty, and his Glory will ſhine out with a Splendour infinitely tranſcending all others at laſt.

2. This ſhou'd engage thoſe, who *have been* Followers of a Multitude *in that which is evil*, now to *ſeparate from them.*

Where any have been carried away, by the Torrent of the Times, into common Sins, the beſt thing they can do is to repent of their Folly, and to break off from their evil Company and Acquaintance. There may be ſome Uneaſineſs and Pain in the *firſt doing* of this, but there will be a Comfort, and Satisfaction *afterward* that will make a ſufficient amends.

Forſake the Fooliſh, and live. 'Tis your Life that is at ſtake, your Salvation that depends upon it; and therefore one would think ſuch Advice as this ſhould be comply'd with immediately. And who can tell, but that one Perſon's withdrawing

from a *Set* of those that live in Wickedness, may have a good Effect upon others. The Conversion of *one* out of a Number of Debauchees, has sometimes prov'd a Means of Reclaiming his *Companions*. So also in wicked Families, the Seriousness of *one* has sometimes spread through a *whole House*. And the Reformation of *one* in a loose Neighbourhood, has sometimes very much better'd *those about him*. Happy should I be this day, and happy would it be for your *Souls*, could I but prevail with you to rise up *for* GOD, from amongst the *Workers of Iniquity*; and thus to try what Influence your Examples might have. If there are any that have *esteem'd* your Judgment, and Wisdom, and Sense of Things; they will the more carefully consider what is done by you, because of that Opinion they have of you. If there are any that have *lov'd* you, and taken pleasure in Expressions of Kindness and Respect, they will be deeply affected and impress'd by what happens to you; and they may possibly be so far affected and won upon, as to occasion a like Change in themselves. And even Those who neither particularly esteem'd nor lov'd your *Persons*, but chose your *Company* only for the sake of your *Vices*, yet may be put upon

Thinking,

Thinking, ſo as to alter their Courſe of Life in ſome Way of *their own*, tho' they ſhould not do it upon ſuch a View of Things, or in ſuch a Method, as you have done. And if it ſhall pleaſe GOD, by your forſaking a Multitude of evil Doers, to bring any of them to an Amendment of their Ways, how great will your Happineſs and Tranſport be, when you ſhall hear them adoringly tell what a good Effect *your* Behaviour had upon them?

But ſuppoſe your abandoning your wicked Companions ſhould not make them *truly good*, yet it may make them *leſs wicked*. It may, perhaps, break up ſome of their Meetings, and tend to diſperſe them: And then, like Coals taken off the Fire, and ſeparated from one another, they ſoon loſe their Heat and are extinct; whereas, if they had kept together, they would have increas'd each other's glowing Luſts and Paſſions.

3. If it be our *Duty* not to follow a *Multitude to do Evil*, it is certainly our *Sin to be aſham'd* or *afraid* of ſuch a *Singularity*.

I do acknowledge my ſelf an utter Enemy to *Affectation*: And where Perſons make themſelves *ſingular* without being able to aſſign a *very good Reaſon* for their

doing ſo, 'tis fit they ſhould be treated with *ſome Severity*. But then, every wiſe Man will take care to diſtinguiſh betwixt a Singularity which is owing to *Principle*, and that which is owing to an *odd* or an *obſtinate Humour*; and to deal with Men accordingly. However; if it ſhould be ſo, that Men of Wit and Power, and the Generality of thoſe we converſe with, ſhould turn all their *Reproaches* upon ſuch as are no farther ſingular, than in their Attempts to *outdo* others in Matters of Religion; we ſhould not be ſhock'd at this, ſo as to be afraid of our Duty, or aſham'd of owning our Principles upon any proper Occaſions. We ſhould rather pity the Weakneſs, and Wickedneſs, of thoſe who *delight* in ſuch *ſcorning*, and whoſe Reſentments are ſo *unjuſtly* grounded.

Where Perſons have been, *for any time*, engaged with a Set of ill Companions; I am ſenſible it will require ſome Courage, as well as Grace, to get above their Taunts and their Diſpleaſure. But, is it not a thouſand pities, that *Baſhfulneſs*, which was deſign'd to be the *Fence* of Virtue, ſhould *impriſon* a Man in his Vices? Oh! how much rather ſhould we break through all the ill Will, and the ill Words, and the ill Carriage of thoſe that deſpiſe Religion,

Religion, than be *aſham*'d of forſakiug ſuch Courſes as are a Diſgrace to our reaſonable Nature, and an Offence to our God? It was a very wiſe, and handſome Reproof of a Gentleman, who, ſeeing his Friend look out from an ill Place, watching his opportunity to ſlip away when he ſhould not be diſcover'd, call'd to him to this purpoſe; "Come your way from "that Place there; you need not be a-"aſham'd to *leave* it, but you ſhould have "been aſham'd *to go* into it."

Deriſion for Virtue, as Mr. *Boyle* ſomewhere obſerves, "is a Grievance as old "as *Job*; who in his Time complained, "That *the juſt and upright Man is laugh-"ed to ſcorn*, Job xii. 4. It was even "Chriſt's own Caſe, of whom one of "the Evangeliſts records, That they "*laughed him to ſcorn*. But we may ſay "of the reſolute Chriſtian, what the "Wiſe Man ſays of his Maker, That he "*ſcorneth the ſcorners*, Prov. iii. 34." The ſame Author again adds, that ſuch as are not of this Temper, "are deeply ac-"ceſſary to their own, and Piety's diſ-"grace, by a Sneakingneſs which ſo im-"plies Guilt, that, where it *proceeds* not "from a Fault, it *is one*." And in reality, to ſhew any thing of an uneaſy Concern, that others ſhould deſpiſe us for

for not ſinning as they do, is the way to make 'em the more outrageous in their Reproaches.

Farther; it is our Sin to be *afraid* of ſeparating from a Multitude of evil Doers, as well as to be aſham'd of it: For the Scripture requires us *not to fear thoſe who can only hurt the Body*, or injure us in this World; but to *fear him* ſupremely, *who can deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* And I think nothing more needs to be added on this Head, but only to put you in mind, that the *Fearful and Unbelieving*, as well as *Murderers*, &c. *ſhall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone*, Revel. xxi. 8.

4. If we are thus to *withdraw* from, or ſtand *againſt the Multitude of Sinners*, what need have we to look for *continual Help and Aſſiſtance from above?*

Without this, we ſhall never be able to hold out againſt thoſe ſeveral *Kinds* and *Degrees* of Oppoſition, which the Multitude of evil Doers will make to us. When we ſee our ſelves beſet, on all ſides, by thoſe that have both *Power* and *Cunning* to ſeduce, or to cruſh us; our Hearts may be ready to ſuggeſt, that *we ſhall one day periſh* by the Hands that are lifted

lifted up againſt us. But let us keep cloſe to GOD, and maintain a lively Senſe of his Favour and Preſence, and then we need not be *afraid, nor diſmayed for all the Multitude* of them that do Evil; to alude to 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 7. *For there is more with Us than with them. With them is an Arm of Fleſh* [Human Power and Policy] *but with us is the* LORD *our* GOD, *to help us*, and to make us victorious.

To him, therefore, we ſhould put up our daily *Prayers*; as ſenſible that all our own natural Force, and all our acquired Abilities and Experience, and all our ſtrongeſt Reſolutions, are too feeble and treacherous, in themſelves, to be relied upon. And tho' we may not be able to act againſt a Multitude of evil Doers, as we *could wiſh* to do; but may ſometimes have reaſon to *lament* the Advantages they have over us; yet this ſhould not diſcourage our Addreſſes to GOD. It ſhould rather add an Accent, and Eagerneſs to them. The more we find ourſelves diſtreſs'd, the more importunate ſhould our Prayers be. And if, by this means we are enabled at any time to gain a Victory againſt evil Counſels, or Examples; we ought to look upon every ſuch Victory, as an Earneſt of more. Thus ſhall we be faithful unto Death.

We

We muſt alſo continually look to JESUS, who has told us, that as the *World hated him*, it *will hate his Followers*. That if we were *of the World*, *the World would love his own*; but becauſe he hath *called us out of the World*, *therefore the World hateth us*. From CHRIST we muſt derive all our Strength; who is able to make us Conquerors, yea, more than Conquerors over all his and our Enemies. I doubt not, but he is often *beſt pleas'd* with us, when the Generality of the World is *moſt ſet againſt us*. And could we ſtedfaſtly adhere to him in a Belief of this, we might depend upon it, that He *would never leave us*, *nor forſake us*.

SOME

SOME

EXTRACTS

From the WRITINGS of

Mr. *Henry Will. Ludolf*,

Suited to the Deſign of the foregoing TREATISE.

I.

THE Intereſt of the *Church Univerſal* doubtleſs conſiſteth in raiſing, enlarging, and adorning that *myſtical Building* which is called the *City* of GOD. As *real Chriſtianity* ſpreads and improves, or ſhrinks

ſhrinks and decays, the univerſal Church may be ſaid either to flouriſh, or decline. This real Chriſtianity lieth in following the Steps of our SAVIOUR, and copying out his Temper and Behaviour in our Lives, as far as we are enabled by divine Grace. True Chriſtianity is a *Reſemblance* of CHRIST, the *Reſtorer* of GOD's *Image* in the Soul of Man, and the *Author and Finiſher of our Faith.* Now the more there are that reſemble CHRIST, the more fully is the glorious END of his *Goſpel* anſwered, and the Church Univerſal is enlarged; and the nearer they come to their Original, the more is the Church adorn'd and rendered glorious.

II.

Thoſe Notions of Chriſtianity muſt therefore be look'd upon as very *low* and *mean*, which would make the Chriſtian Religion to conſiſt in outward *Forms* of *Worſhip* merely, or in a particular *Set* of Opinions; and in thinking that Heaven is to be ſtock'd out of one *particular Church* only, or out of one Sect and Party of Chriſtians. This falſe Suppoſition hath betray'd many into very unchriſtian Courſes againſt thoſe that differ from them, in *Form* and *Party.* The Effects produc'd hereby, are very deplorable.

rable. A Remedy has been ſought for by many pious Souls, who have made it their Study to reconcile outward Differences. But Experience ſhews how fruitleſs ſuch Endeavours are. It would not ſignify much, if all the Men in the World were brought to uſe the ſame external Form, and Expreſſions, in their Belief and Church-Service, ſhould they continue all the while Slaves to Sin, and abide in the Kingdom of Darkneſs. But *Holineſs* or *real Chriſtianity*, ſincerely purſued in every particular Church, would bring People over to that ſweet and heavenly Temper, to which Jarring and Diſquiet is a perfect Stranger.

III.

It is my Opinion, that a much better Way to Peace may be found, than by compiling *Confeſſions* to be received by all Churches, and arguing for or againſt this and the other Set of *Tenets*. Rather let thoſe that differ, vie with one another, who can produce *moſt Inſtances* of ſuch Souls as in their ſeveral Churches have attained to the glorious *Renovation* of God's *Image* in the Heart: Such Souls as are endued with that *Faith*, which *overcomes the World*; and by which Christ *dwelleth in us*, enabling thoſe that

that receive him to become *Children* of God. They who are become *new Creatures* in Christ Jesus, and are united with him who is the *Head* of the *Church*, need not busy themselves about a *Confession* to unite and keep them together: They are all heartily united already; and live, as it were by one *common Soul*, like the Christians of old.

IV.

The Number of them that are united on this Foundation, is indeed very small. Yet *some* there are, scattered up and down, whom God in his infinite Mercy hath appointed and reserved to be a *Salt* and Cement in the Earth. These few ought to be more *abundantly thankful* to that Goodness, which hath so mercifully distinguish'd them from the corrupt Mass. And this their *Thankfulness* will best shew it self, by endeavouring to benefit *others* by what they have received. The greater Gifts they have received from the inexhaustible Divine Treasure, the more should they be concerned to advance the Glory of so liberal a Giver. Wherefore the aforesaid *Proficients* in real Christianity, can hardly make any better Return to Heaven's Favours, whilst they are here on Earth, than by heartily bestirring themselves

ſelves to communicate unto *others* that *Divine Nature* whereof they themſelves have been made Partakers.

V.

After theſe Premiſes, I infer, that the *Intereſt* of the *Church Univerſal* might be happily promoted, if there was a ſuitable Care taken about the Qualifications and Lives of thoſe that *miniſter* in holy Things; and about the forming of *Schools* and Places of *Education*, ſo as to promote real Piety. Let Preachers, inſtead of railing at one another, make it their *only Buſineſs* to preach Faith and Repentance. And when People of differing Perſuaſions fall into Company, let them avoid *Controverſy*; and talk more upon Subjects that are *owned* in *Theory*, but not ſuitably applied to *Practice*. Let thoſe that have ſuch Minds and Spirits, that feel the inward Power and Love of Religion, *ſettle a Correſpondence* with one another, and adviſe and encourage and ſtrengthen each other's Hands, in thus promoting real Chriſtianity. Theſe things deſerve a careful and diſtinct Conſideration.

VI.

1. Let thoſe that are in Authority, or that have any Influence in ſuch Matters, ſtudy all poſſible Means to provide ſuch GUIDES for the People, as have *themſelves* the *experimental Knowledge* of the above-mentioned *real Chriſtianity*. Perſons that have not themſelves recover'd Life by CHRIST, will hardly be able to explain, and duly to lay before their Hearers, what is that *old Man with his corrupt deceitful Luſts*, that muſt be *put off*; and what is that *new Man* which after GOD is *created in Righteouſneſs and true* HOLINESS: What it is to be *dead* with CHRIST; and what, to be raiſed to Newneſs of Life: In theſe things true Repentance and Faith do conſiſt: And theſe two Heads are inſiſted on by St. *Paul* as the main Ingredients of Salvation, and an unfeigned Converſion. Learned or florid Diſcourſes, without this Foundation, will avail little or nothing toward enlarging the Kingdom of CHRIST: They may perhaps gain ſome Credit to the Preacher, and fill the Hearers with ſome fine Notions; but they will not make real Chriſtians. Nay, tho' they ſhould convince the Auditory of the Advantages of a good moral Life; yet

Eph. iv. 22, 24.

yet will little be done in Reality whilſt the Principles of *Diſobedience*, *Self-will*, and *Self-love*, continue the unhappy Spring of the Heart. There is a vain *conceited Morality*, which is far enough from being that *Righteouſneſs* of God, which is the great *Scope* of the Goſpel. Such Moraliſts ſet up their *own Righteouſneſs*, for want of due Inſtruction about the deplorable State of *Corrupt Nature*, and the great Neceſſity and glorious Advantage of that *new Birth* which is from above, and *formeth* Gal. iv. 19. Christ *in us*. It is by this means that Men are brought to the *Righteouſneſs* of God, which is by *Faith in* Christ, *Phil.* iii. 9.

The Preachers of Religion ſhould be ſuch, as can ſay with St. *Paul*, *Be ye Followers of me even as I alſo am of Chriſt*. At leaſt, there ought to be the utmoſt Care taken, that none be ſet up or encourag'd, who may bring a Reproach upon good *Doctrine* by their bad *Examples*.

VII.

2. That ſuch a Miniſtry may be had every where in the Church of Chriſt; all *Places* of *Education* ſhould be ſo ordered, that a *ſolid Foundation* for true *Wiſdom* may be *laid there*. That is, by inuring Youth

Youth to *Exerciſes of Piety* and *Devotion*; that they may betimes come to have a ſincere Regard to him, who is the Fountain of a ſound Underſtanding, and of ſubſtantial Wiſdom. It is for want of this, that we find ſo vaſt a number of *Scholars* uſeleſs, or hurtful, with all their Knowledge: They make *Fame* their great End, rather than the Glory of GOD, and the Advantage of their Neighbour: They ſeek to be verſed in hard Authors, rather than in the *plain*, though moſt *important* things of Scripture: They are not duly concerned, in acquiring *firſt* an experimental Knowledge of the great Difference between living to GOD, and living to *ourſelves*; and *then* influencing their Fellow-Creatures alſo, with a Senſe of ſo noble a Truth. I have met with ſome, that took more delight in giving an account of an *old Manuſcript*, than in *turning a Soul* from the World to Heaven. Which plainly ſhews they were altogether Strangers to the Worth and Excellency of Souls, ſince they took ſo little pains to reclaim them.

Nor is it probable, Heaven's Intereſt ſhould be heartily eſpouſed by thoſe, with whom the *Love* of the *World* bears the chief Sway. Providence hath wiſely ordered it, that Men ſhould be diſappointed

pointed in their Ends, when they give up themſelves to make that of their Religion which it was never deſigned for. Some have grievouſly ſmarted for their Vanity, in affecting the Name and Reputation of *vaſt Scholars*; and have become utterly unfit for thinking right *themſelves*, whilſt they have been waſting their Lives in ſtuffing their Brains with *other Mens* Notions.

VIII.

3. Inſtead of *railing* at one another, and preaching *Hatred* in the room of *Love* and *Charity*, the Clergy of all particular Churches ſhould make it their only buſineſs to preach *Faith* and *Repentance*. In this they would ſhew more of an Apoſtolick Spirit, and would reap more *Fruit* from their Labours. I have often wondred at their taking more pleaſure in making Proſelytes to their Church, than in turning their Flock from *Earth* to *Heaven*, and from the *Slavery* of the Prince of this World, to the *glorious Liberty* of the Kingdom of God.

He that hath a Tenderneſs for the Perſuaſion he profeſſeth, ſhould not encourage vicious Worldlings to come over to it; ſince a great many well-diſpoſed Souls ground their Eſteem of a Church, upon

the Number of good Patterns of Piety which that Church affords.

Upon the whole, it is the Intereſt of thoſe that would raiſe their Church and Perſuaſion to a greater Luſtre and Dignity, to ſee that it be clear'd (as far as lies in them) from the common Corruptions that have ſpread themſelves through all the Parties of *Chriſtendom*. Their Emulation ſhould be, to have all Chriſtian *Virtues* ſhine brighter in their *own Church* than in any other.

IX.

4. When People of differing Perſuaſions fall into Company, they ſhould avoid *all manner of Controverſy*. Men are ſeldom bettered hereby; but their Animoſities are often enflam'd to a higher degree. Moſt People think it a leſſening their own Reputation, and that of their Maſters, if they ſhould yield but one *Tittle* of their Scheme of Religion, and of the Syſtem of Divinity they have received from their Fathers: Whereas, frequent Good is done even upon Men of a *differing* Perſuaſion, by declining controverted Points, and grounding the Diſcourſe upon Things *generally* allow'd; that is, upon Matters *owned* by all Parties to be eſſential to Salvation, tho' practis'd by very few.

It is a Presumption to set about demonstrating how *Three* are *One*, or *One* is *Three*; both Parties having run themselves into Inconveniences by their Explications of the *Mystery* of the ever-blessed Trinity. It stands us in more stead to know experimentally that we are *One* with Christ in God; (and to enjoy the Happiness of that Peace which passeth all Understanding, as the blessed Product of that Union;) than to know the nicest Distinctions that busy Men have contrived about the Mysteries of Salvation.

X.

5. Those *Few* that know Christ aright, may endeavour to *get acquainted*; and if distant, may *settle* a *Correspondence* with one another on account of *carrying on the Work of Religion.* By those that know Christ aright, we are to understand those that know him as the *Power and Wisdom* of God in the Faithful, (1 *Cor.* i. 24.) and by this Knowledge have a Sense of *eternal Life* springing up in them (*John* xvii. 3.) and thus have attained to the blessed Experience of being *one Spirit* with Christ, (1 *Cor.* vi. 17.) If such Persons were to maintain a *Correspondence*, it would not only prove a mutual Comfort and Encouragement to

themſelves, but they might alſo conſer with one another, about promoting the common Intereſt of Chriſt againſt the Kingdom and Power of Darkneſs: That is, againſt all the Deluſions which the Slaves of that miſerable Kingdom are under, and by which they are continually thwarting the good Deſigns of the Heirs of the Kingdom of GOD. In the mean time, let every one make it his main Buſineſs to ſtrengthen the *Weak* of his own Perſuaſion, and to reſcue *them* from periſhing that are upon the Brink of Deſtruction. By ſuch Endeavours, great Advantages would be added to the Church univerſal in Time; every Congregation contributing what they can towards building up the *Walls of Jeruſalem* on their Side.

XI.

If theſe few *plain Rules* ſhould prove ſucceſsful, to retrieve the Cauſe of Religion in this deplorable Age, and under the Bleſſing of GOD ſhould gain ground; then would the meek, peaceable, heavenly Spirit of CHRIST, ſoon dethrone the broiling, haughty, and contentious Spirit of *Satan* in Peoples Minds. Then would they haſten, without Shyneſs or Impediment, to *brotherly Love* and Embraces: Whilſt the turbulent Oppoſers of

Love and *Union*, would be left to fret away by their ſo much beloved Envy and Sourneſs.

It is a happy Sign of our Growth in the Love of God, when his *Mercies* beſtowed upon *others*, rejoice us *as much* as if we had received them *ourſelves*. It is a Sign we have obtained *Peace* with God, and that *his* Intereſt is become our *own*. True Humility makes us think the ſmalleſt Favour to be more than we deſerve: And therefore we can never envy others if they have received *more*; nor repine at our own Condition if we have received *leſs*. True *Humility* fits us for all *other* Gifts and Graces. The greateſt of theſe, is *Love* and *Charity*; which is the *fulfilling* of the *Law*, the more *excellent Way*, and the *Bond* of *Perfection*, comprehending in itſelf all other Commandments. 'O Lord, teach 'me this great Leſſon of *true Humility*! 'that I may never be *puffed up* by any 'of thy Gifts; and that I may not *envy* 'my Brother, if thou beſtoweſt more 'upon him, than upon myſelf. Deſtroy 'in me that helliſh Principle of *Self-* 'Love, which defileth the *beſt* of thy 'Gifts; and give me true Humility, 'which exalteth the *meaneſt* of thy *Ser-* 'vants.

XII.

Some Paſſages out of Macarius.

" WE have not yet *put on the new* " *Man*, which is created after " GOD in *Holineſs*, becauſe we " have not yet *put off the old Man*, " which is corrupt according to the *Deſires* " *of Deceit*. We are not yet transformed by " the *Renovation* of our Mind, becauſe " we continue in Conformity to the " World, by the *Vanity* of our Mind. " We are not yet become a Temple of " GOD, and a Habitation of the *Holy* " *Ghoſt*; becauſe we are ſtill a Temple " of *Idols*, and a lurking Place of *wicked* " *Spirits*, by the ſtrong Bent of our Souls " to Paſſion. We are not yet become " Heirs of GOD, and Joint-Heirs with " CHRIST, becauſe the Spirit of *Servi-* " *tude*, and not of *Adoption* reigns in us. " We are not glorified with CHRIST, " becauſe we do not *ſuffer* with him.

" There is a great difference between " *real* Chriſtians, and the reſt of Man- " kind. *Real Chriſtians* have their Mind " and Underſtanding always in a *heaven-*

" *ly*

" *ly* Diſpoſition: Eternal Bleſſings are
" always in their ſight, by reaſon of
" the Communion and Participation of
" the Holy Ghoſt. They are born of
" GOD from above, and dignified to
" be GOD's Children in Truth and Pow-
" er. After much Labour, and Time,
" they arrive at a Settledneſs, Steddineſs,
" and Comfort; ceaſing to be ſifted and
" toſſed by fickle and vain Thoughts.
" In this they are better and greater than
" the World, becauſe their Underſtand-
" ing reſts in the *Peace* of Chriſt, and
" the *Love* of the Holy Ghoſt; as the
" Scripture ſpeaking of ſuch ſaith, *They*
" *are paſſed from Death unto Life.* Where-
" fore, the Difference of Chriſtians from
" the reſt of Men, doth not conſiſt in
" *Form*, and outward Appearance; but
" by the Renovation of the Mind, by
" the Tranquillity of their Thoughts, by
" the Love of their LORD, and by a hea-
" venly Longing, the *new Creature* of
" Chriſtians differs from all the Men of
" the World.

Some other PASSAGES, *tending to explain and improve the divine Life, from* Ludolf's MEDITATIONS.

I.

SOUND Reaſoning may convince a Man of the Lovelineſs of the new Creature, and of Holineſs; but all the Reaſon in the World cannot *produce* the new Man: Nay, often our corrupted *Self-Will* worketh the ſtronger, the more we argue againſt it. For, as long as we ſeek by Reaſoning *only*, to work ourſelves into GOD's Friendſhip, we undermine the chief Goſpel-Myſtery, *viz.* GOD's infinite Love in giving his SON to *reſtore* ſuch Wretches to his Favour; *reconciling us to himſelf by* JESUS CHRIST, 2 *Cor.* v. 18. We are not yet in him, nor raiſed with him, much leſs advanced to his *heavenly Places*, whilſt we are not perſuaded that all things are of GOD, who reconcileth us to himſelf by CHRIST.

Happy

Happy are they that have received the *Miniſtry of Reconciliation*, and go about it humbly, chearfully, and faithfully: They will find ſuch Satisfaction in it, as will ſerve for an experimental Commentary upon that Text, My *Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me.*

II.

It is an unaccountable Boldneſs to *reaſon* againſt him who hath given us our *Reaſon*, and to undermine his *Authority* by thoſe very Powers, which were deſign'd to promote his *Glory*.

I had rather experimentally know and taſte the Effect of the heavenly Food, than quarrel with my Brother, which of us hath the beſt *Notion*, either of the *Nature* of this Food, or of the *Manner* how it is convey'd into the Soul.

III.

In the Article of *Predeſtination*, it is far more agreeable to the infinite Goodneſs of God, to ſay, ——— that Man will not lay hold on the *Tender* of Grace, than to ſay, ——— that God will not *give it*.

It is hard to think of *Grace* in ſuch a manner, as that *good Souls* ſhould aſcribe nothing unduly to *themſelves*: And that they ſhould alſo avoid flinging the blame

upon God, of ſo many *wicked People* continuing in Darkneſs. But the more any Perſon is drawn unto GOD, the rather he employs his Thoughts about the Excellency of GOD's Mercies conferr'd on him, and about his own Unworthineſs to receive them. He wiſheth, and ſeeketh to improve them to the *Giver*'s Glory; rather bemoaning his Sloth and Ingratitude (that he who hath received ſo much, yet hath done ſo little for GOD) than breaking his Brain about the *Reaſons* of the Damnation of *others:* Nor dare he allow himſelf in a preſumptuous judging of the *Ways* and *Methods* of GOD about them.

IV.

In the Prophet *Haggai* GOD ſays, *I will ſhake the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land; and I will ſhake all Nations, and the Deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory*, Hag. ii. 6, 7. Theſe Words, as they relate to the Operations preceding our LORD's coming in *human Nature*; ſo they may no leſs be applied to his coming in his *ſpiritual Diſpenſation* into the Hearts and Souls of Men; both being preceded by dreadful Shakings, and terrible Judgments. This is experimentally felt

felt in the Work of Converſion, before CHRIST be manifeſted in the Soul. What great Commotions, Doubts, and Perplexities do many paſs through, before Chriſt, the *Hope of Glory*, be revealed in them? And how long is it, in ſome Caſes, before the Mind comes to be ſettled, after ſo violent a Storm, on a ſure and unſhaken Foundation?

V.

FAITH is the Life of the inner Ma[1] The Embryo, or *Beginning* of this ſpiritua Life, conſiſts in believing the *Remiſſion of Sins* for CHRIST's ſake, and the Communications of *Grace* and *Strength* to follow him, and that this Pardon and Strength will be granted to *me*. The Progreſs or *Youth* of the ſpiritual Life is, when I find my Deſires after CHRIST grow more ſtrong and fervent, and I am put upon all manner of Activity and Diligence in the ways of Religion, from that *Light* which is the continual Impulſe of the new Creature. The *Maturity*, or completer Age of Faith, is known by its Energy and Eſtabliſhment; when CHRIST by Faith overcomes *Hell* and *Death* within us, and fixeth the Heart immoveably, and filleth the Soul with the *Fulneſs of God*.

VI.

The END of *Chriſtianity*, and of the whole Work of Redemption, is, — That GOD may *again be glorified* in the Creature. This is expreſs'd variouſly, but very clearly and ſtrongly, in *Scripture*.

Rom. vi. 22. *Being made free from Sin, and become Servants to* GOD, *ye have your Fruit unto Holineſs, and the End everlaſting Life.*

2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves; but unto* HIM *who died for them, and roſe again.*

Gal. i. 4. *He gave himſelf for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil World, according to the Will of* GOD *and our Father.*

Titus ii. 4. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

1 Tim. i. 5. *The End of the Commandment is Love out of a pure Heart.*

Heb. xiii. 12. JESUS, *that he might ſanctify the People with his own Blood, ſuffered without the Gate.*

1 Pet. ii. 24. *He bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, ſhould live unto Righteouſneſs.*

The

The Deſign and ultimate END of GOD's infinite Love in our Creation and Redemption, is *his Glory in our Happineſs.* A pure Heart and ſpiritual divine Nature is required of neceſſity to that *intimate Union*, by which GOD lives in us through CHRIST, and we in him, unto all Eternity.

VII.

People would fain go to Heaven, but are unwilling to go in CHRIST's Way. Thoſe that will go to Happineſs THROUGH CHRIST, muſt learn all the hard Leſſons he hath enjoined. They muſt believe in a CHRIST *ſlain* and *crucified*, by the Rulers of this World: They muſt take up *his Yoke*, and muſt learn of him to be *meek* and *lowly* in Heart: They muſt practiſe the Duties of *Mortification* and *Self-denial*, ſo highly recommended by him: They muſt bear the *Contempt* of the World; muſt love *Chriſt's Croſs*; and follow his *Footſteps*, as he hath left them a Pattern. This, this it is that makes CHRIST an unwelcome Gueſt, to the nicer ſort (alas! for them) of our *modiſh Chriſtians.* Yet there is no other Way to GOD, but this Way THROUGH CHRIST.

VIII.

VIII.

The true Chriſtian hath CHRIST always in his Thoughts, as the SPRING, PATTERN, and AIM, of all his Actions. The more we *live* to our ſelves, the more we entangle our ſelves in Corruption, Diſquiet, and Miſery: The more we *deny* ourſelves, and endeavour to live to GOD, the more we enjoy Comfort and Happineſs. To live to GOD, is to pleaſe that incomprehenſible bountiful Maſter, who reckons it an Enjoyment of his own Glory, when he makes his Servants partake of it. A high Proof, this, that *Selfiſhneſs* is a Principle oppoſite to GOD's Nature. And ſhall we think much of devoting our whole ſilly Life, to the glorifying of him, who hath ſuch *Propenſion* as well as *Power* to glorify thoſe again, that are willing to direct and refer all to him only?

IX.

In Diſputes about Religion, I cannot find the Diſputants are ſo much concerned, who ſhall get to Heaven ſooneſt; (I hope they all own CHRIST to be the only way:) but they rather quarrel about their Advantages and Accommodations in their travelling to that better World. A mighty

to

To-do they make, which of them have the beſt *Means* and *Helps*, and who ſhall have moſt *Proviſion* for their Journey. Yet all this while, if you watch their Life and Conduct, they rather tread the Path that leads to Deſtruction, than that which leads to Salvation. Their Ways are generally more conformable to the Humour of the Prince of *this World*, than to the Laws and Example of CHRIST.

X.

The Beauty of our Souls conſiſts in their *Reſemblance* to CHRIST. This Reſemblance is obtained by thoſe inward Manifeſtations whereby a Soul is transformed into CHRIST's Image and Likeneſs. A Soul which hath been exercis'd by great *Sufferings*, and is conformed to CHRIST's Obedience by holding out under them, is a dearer Object unto GOD, than a Soul which finds and goes on in a *ſmoother* Way. The more *Obedience*, the more of CHRIST; who tho' he was *a Son*, yet *learnt Obedience by the Things that he ſuffered.* There is no great Obedience in doing the good Works, which GOD enables us to do with *Eaſe*, and without *Oppoſition:* A Soul that loves GOD ever ſo little, will find more of *Reward*, than *Labour* in theſe.

XI.

XI.

It is a ſtrange thing we ſhould be afraid of *Croſſes*, after we are convinced of their Uſefulneſs towards breaking the *Bent* of our own *diſorderly Wills*, and the *purifying* of our Souls *from Sin*. When I was troubled with the *Stone*, I did not ſcruple to truſt my ſelf in the hands of an *Operator* *, and to undergo the moſt painful and hazardous Cure of *being cut*. Why ſhould I then fear to put my ſelf under the Diſcipline of GOD? or repine at any Suffering which he may think proper and neceſſary for deſtroying the *Body of Sin* and *Death?* If I loved GOD above all things, Sin would afflict me above all things; and I ſhould leave it entirely to the moſt Merciful and Almighty *Phyſician*, to uſe what *Method* and *Means* he ſaw fit for my *Cure*.

XII.

In the *new Life*, where Spirit, Soul, and Body are *ſanctified*, GOD rules in all the Powers and Faculties both of Soul

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* The Author was *Cut* for the *Stone* at *London*, in 1694. and in 1698 he travell'd to the *Levant*.

and Body: And where he rules, there is his *Kingdom*; and in that Kingdom there is *Freedom* and *Happineſs*. On the other hand, whilſt Men are in an unregenerate State, Reaſon and Will and Paſſions are all enſlaved by the *helliſh Tyrant*. The worſt of this Caſe is, that the more Sinners are flattered with the Hopes of *Liberty*, the more dreadfully they are deceived; and at laſt more cruelly tormented. There cannot be any thing more true, than that Declaration of GOD's Word; *There is no Peace to the Wicked*, Iſai. lvii. 21.

XIII.

GOD could overcome *Satan* in one Moment in us: But his infinite Wiſdom rather chuſes to manage our Salvation *gradually*, that the greater Shame may fall upon the great Enemy of his Glory. GOD carries on his Work in ſo deep and ſecret a manner, that none can ſee, no not *Satan* himſelf, how the Soul is begotten to a *lively Hope*, or how CHRIST is *formed* within us. There are Emanations from GOD inacceſſible to any Creature, but yet influencing every Creature with that Life which it enjoys. A Soul that is *born from above*, is ſecretly and powerfully impregnated with the TRUTH and

and Love of God, and with all Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

XIV.

It is an eminent Degree of God's Grace, if a Man be brought to prefer the *Will* of God to his *own Proſperity*; and to hold to this, upon a Perſuaſion that the Will of God is the *only good* and *holy* Will. 'Till a Man arrives at this pitch of Grace, he is not fit to be made Partaker of God's Glory. But Grace and Glory are both the Gift of God.

Some plead for their allowed *Infirmities*, ſaying, *we cannot be perfect*; and this they make a Cloak for their Impenitence. Others too indiſcreetly preach up the Study of *Perfection*, and thereby enſnare themſelves and others into ſpiritual Pride and Conceit.

XV.

What a vaſt difference is there, when we work *our ſelves*, and when God works in us! This is moſt evident in our *Prayers* to God; and alſo in the Effect of his *Truths* upon us. *One* Word which the heavenly Teacher ſpeaks to a Soul, thereby enabling it to diſcharge the Duty of a faithful Servant, is better than a thouſand *Commentaries* of Men.

He

He that heartily ſeeketh GOD, is already found by GOD; who ſhould ever be conſidered by us, as the *Spring*, *Help*, and *End* of all our Actions.

XVI.

A faithful Servant is not contented to know only WHAT Buſineſs his Maſter hath for him to do, but he will alſo take his *Maſter*'s Directions HOW to do it. If GOD puts a good Deſign into our head, we muſt apply to him for Direction alſo *how* to accompliſh it. If with due Humility we conſider, we have neither *Strength* of our own to do it, nor *Wiſdom* to do it well, we ſhall learn to caſt ourſelves wholly upon *Him*; and then our Works are done IN GOD, and are like to bear everlaſting Fruit.

XVII.

The *Flaws* in our good Actions are very uſeful to humble us, and to exalt GOD. The more ſenſible we are of theſe, the more GOD is exalted, provided we be not unduly ſunk and diſcouraged. The greater my Failings are, the more is that Mercy to be adored that will work thro' ſo much *Frailty*.

But we often want Strength to correct our Failings, and to practiſe what we know,

know, becauſe we are not thankful enough for that Knowledge GOD has given us. Were we more grateful to GOD for beſtowing Knowledge upon us, he would further and better enable us to *act ſuitably* to that Knowledge.

This will lead us to adore the unſpeakable Goodneſs of GOD, that he ſhould *reward* us for the Good which He himſelf enables us to do. The *Inclination*, *Direction*, and *Power* we have to do Good, is his. The Pleaſure of *having done* it, is a great Reward; and the *Wiſdom*, *Ability*, and *Opportunity* hereby gained, for doing *more Good*, makes the Reward ſtill greater.

XVIII.

No Deſire is allowable in a Child of GOD, but what is ſubſervient to his Deſire after *Holineſs*. For this is the Will of GOD, even *our Sanctification*. He therefore that deſires Holineſs, deſires the Will of GOD ſhould be done, which is the nobleſt of our Deſires and Wiſhes.

It is the Speech of the *Heart* only that is acceptable to GOD. Bare *Words* are too *outward*, and the Strength and Spirit is often loſt, by care about Language.

What we aſk of GOD in CHRIST's Name, that is, in a *Frame* and *Temper* of Mind like his, will certainly be given to us; becauſe GOD delights in the Image of his SON. But before we have *put on* Chriſt, we cannot be ſaid to *ask in his Name*; becauſe in Scripture-Senſe, the *Name* and the *Nature* of a thing are the ſame. And ſo may be underſtood the *New-Name*, Rev. ii. 17. and GOD's *Name*, Ch. iii. ver. 12.

XIX.

A great many read the *Bible* with a deſign to be more *learned*; but few read it with a deſign to be more *humble*, *pious*, and *heavenly-minded*. When GOD is pleaſed to ſpeak to the Soul, it is not by bare Words, but by a *real Power*, and a Communication of his Light, Life, and Love. Happy are thoſe Souls that are pure and refined enough to underſtand GOD's Language.

XX.

A chriſtian Behaviour under *Croſſes*, conſiſts in patiently bearing them; and under *Comforts*, in keeping up a Senſe of our being unworthy of them: He who is a Chriſtian indeed, will never think that he can ſhake off the *one*, or deſerve the

the *other:* But ſtill wiſheth that *both* may work together, for effecting and eſtabliſhing the *main End* of Religion in his Soul; namely, that *Self-will* and *Self-love* may be overcome, and GOD more and more lov'd and truſted by him.

There is no Affliction ſo *great*, but GOD hath a *Remedy* againſt it: And there is no Affliction ſo *ſmall*, but the ſtouteſt Man may *periſh* under it, if he be left of GOD.

XXI.

A *Prophet* foretelling Futurities, and proving his Miſſion by *Miracles*, hath no contemptible Gift conferr'd upon him: But is far leſs in the eye of GOD, for all that, than one who by ſincere *Reſignation* offers up himſelf intirely to GOD, and out of pure Love to his Great Maſter *cheerfully ſuffers* whatſoever he thinks fit to lay upon him. It is not the *Man* that works the Miracle, but the *Power* of GOD: And it doth not argue the *Wiſdom* of Man to know future things, but comes from a higher Wiſdom, *freely influencing* his Underſtanding. Whereas the Duty of a *cheerful Reſignation* cannot be attained to, without the *Concurrence* of *Man*'s *Will*; and conſequently cannot be without an hearty Reformation of all the

the Faculties of the Mind. This Change of *Nature* muſt needs bear a nearer Reſemblance to the Image of God, than the Gift of *Miracles* and *Prophecy*. Nor is any *Prophet* ſure of his *own* Salvation, but by the Principle of *Faith* only, whereby he ſerves his Great Maſter with *Humility*, *Love*, and *Faithfulneſs*.

XXII.

The more we *ſtrive* to do the Will of God, the more our Soul is ſtrengthned to do it in an *higher* degree. The gracious Influence of his Light and Spirit increaſes and gathers Strength, by the *good Uſe* we make of what we have received. At this rate, God is both the *Guide*, *Strength*, and *Reward* of thoſe that do his Will.

XXIII.

The carnal Will of the *Old Man* moves continually toward its own Centre, the *Earth*, from whence the Fleſh took its *Riſe*. The ſpiritual Will of the *New Man* hath its Centre too, toward which it continually moveth; that is, God, who by his *Word* hath created the new Man, and inſpired him with a *divine Will*. The Colliſion of theſe *two* oppoſite Wills moving contrary ways, one upward, and the

the other downward, cauſeth that fierce *Combat* betwixt the *Fleſh* and the *Spirit*; of which the Scripture ſpeaks at large, and which daily diſquiets the ſpiritual Pilgrim in his Way to Reſt and Happineſs.

XXIV.

Four things are required for gaining the Victory in a ſpiritual Combat. (1.) An intire *Diſtruſt* of our own Strength. (2.) An intire *Reliance* upon the Power of Christ, whoſe Strength is moſt manifeſted when we have leaſt of a Sufficiency in *ourſelves*. (3.) A good Uſe of our *reaſonable* Faculties, and a watchful Reſtraint of our *bodily* Senſes. (4.) A patient *Conſtancy* in Prayer and Supplication.

XXV.

It is an excellent Prayer recorded, 1. *Theſſ.* v. 23. I pray God your *whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our* Lord Jesus Christ. But the original Text may be alſo rendered in this manner;— That your Spirit, Soul and Body, *be preſerved blameleſs in the Preſence* of Christ. As if it had been ſaid, That Christ, after he is once formed within you (*Gal.* iv. 19.)

19.) may preſide over all the Faculties of Spirit, Soul, and Body, and by his conſtant and *immediate Preſence* may direct and influence all your Actions. Thus we are taught to aſcribe the *Preſervation* of the new Creature, intirely to CHRIST, as well as the *Beginning* of it.

XXVI.

The *Foundation* of GOD ſtandeth ſure, having this *Seal*, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*: And, *Let every one that nameth the Name of* CHRIST depart *from Iniquity*: (2 Tim. ii. 19.) Herein the Apoſtle lays down the *Terms* of the Covenant of Grace betwixt GOD and the *Soul*. On GOD's ſide it is thus expreſs'd; *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; that is, he carefully looks after them, he protects and maintains them, he healeth, and leadeth, and loveth them; the Knowledge GOD hath of Men being altogether an *affectionate* and *paternal* Knowledge. But then we ought to anſwer all the Kindneſs of our LORD, by a ſuitable Return of Love and Obedience; which is thus expreſs'd, *Let every one depart from Iniquity*.

XXVII.

The natural Man placeth his Misery in *outward* Troubles and Afflictions: A Christain reckoneth his Misery to lie in that *unfaithful Temper* of Mind, which makes him slothful and unconstant in the Work of his LORD; and too often and eagerly sets him on his *own Work*.

A truly faithful Soul rejoiceth rather in *Faithfulness* it self, than in the Reward which is annexed to it.

XXVIII.

The *Unfaithfulness* of a Servant toward his Master consists (1.) in *neglecting* him; (2.) in being *ashamed* of him and of his Service; (3.) in *appropriating* his Master's Goods to himself, and using them as if they were *his own*. The same will hold if we consider the Relation Men bear to GOD, their Great LORD and MASTER.

XXIX.

Many pretend they *love* GOD, and yet care not how little they are in his company. Yea, they love that Company best, where GOD is shut out and neglected; and where they are *ashamed* to own him,

and are constrained to use their Gifts, as if they were *their own*, not their LORD's.

XXX.

It *is more blessed to give than to receive.* The Nature of true Love is, to diffuse and to communicate itself, even as GOD who is LOVE doth communicate himself. The nearer a Soul is transformed into the Likeness of *divine Love*, the more Joy there is in *communicating:* Such will take more pleasure in *giving* to others, than *receiving* from them. The Joy increaseth with the Gifts bestowed.

XXXI.

No body is saved by his *Sect* in Religion; but many are lost by relying too much on the Goodness of their Sect. Sects are busy about the *Form* and *Modes* of the *Means* of *Grace:* Whereas, true Christianity consists in the *real* Operations of Grace, and in a practical Improvement of the Means enjoy'd. There are more Subjects to *Antichrist*, than to CHRIST (as we have reason to fear) in the best Churches. And some few Subjects may be left to CHRIST, in the worst Churches.

In our natural State of Corruption, we would not have any one *better* than our-

ſelves; and ſo we are apt to believe, that none are better in the *main*. From this Principle flows Peoples ſuſpecting others to be guilty of thoſe Faults which they are guilty of themſelves.

XXXII.

We deſpiſe many a thing, becauſe it doth not agree with our particular Fancy. We cannot look upon its Goodneſs with an Eye of *univerſal Love* and *Wiſdom*, becauſe it doth not ſuit our particular Taſte and Judgment. And yet, *bitter* things are more grateful to ſome Palates, than the *ſweet*; and GOD hath placed more Uſefulneſs in them.

It is a common Fault, that we *undervalue* the Gifts of others, even thoſe that are ſpiritual, if they be *different* from our own; tho' the wiſe Diſpoſer of all hath his Ends in beſtowing them: He knoweth beſt, in what manner every Servant ought to glorify him. It is *Pride*, and *Diſobedience*, to covet the Gifts of others; however we may flatter ourſelves, and fancy it is all out of pure Love to GOD. A faithful Servant leaveth it wholly to his Maſter, which Way he ſhall be pleaſed to employ him: For though he delighteth to work in his Maſter's Vineyard, yet doth he ſo love his Maſter, that

that to ſee his Buſineſs done, is a very great Satisfaction, whoever hath a hand in it. He rejoiceth in his Maſter's Proſperity, becauſe he hath no ſeparate Property or Intereſt. At this rate, the Children of GOD have a Glimpſe of that Happineſs ſpoken of by their LORD: What is *mine*, is *thine*. And, on the other hand, it will hold too; What is *thine*, is *mine*.

But ſo far are ſome beguiled by the Craft of *Satan*, that, under a pretence of ſeeking GOD's *Glory*, they rob him of what is his, and aſcribe to themſelves what is entirely due to their Maſter. The *Defect* of ſuch Men may be gathered from the Puniſhment inflicted on *Rebels*; who, attempting to appropriate the Honour and Prerogative of their Prince to themſelves, incur the ſevereſt *Penalty*. They loſe all, inſtead of gaining more: Whereas, faithful Servants, that ſeek only their Prince's Glory, may enjoy ſafely, the good things which belong to the Prince himſelf.

XXXIII.

HUMILITY is the *eſſential Character* of a Chriſtian, or of one in whom CHRIST is formed. Tho' CHRIST, being in the Form of GOD, eſteemed it no Uſurpa-

tion to be like GOD; yet he humbled himſelf to the loweſt Degree of a Servant, and performed an Act of infinite LOVE, the eſſential Quality of GOD himſelf. He therefore, who comes neareſt to his Saviour's *Obedience*, *Love*, and *Humility*, will have the greateſt Share in his Name, which is above all Names. Thoſe are moſt beloved of GOD, who deſcend *loweſt* in the Performance of his Will; which Will is nothing but LOVE, and a Delight to impart his Happineſs to ſuch as are moſt poor in their own eyes. Upon this account, They will ſhine brighteſt that have been moſt inſtrumental in bringing others to Righteouſneſs.

XXXIV.

GOD in his Mercy affords us now and then a little Sight of the glorious Abode of his Saints with himſelf, which is the Aim of our Pilgrimage. But in our moving forward, we meet with one Hill after another, that intercepts our Sight of the Dwellings of Peace and Joy. What then? Shall we give over our Journey, or go back again? No: True Chriſtian Souls will preſs the more forward, when they find themſelves out of ſight of their beloved Home. A ſure ſign, this, that we are drawn by a divine Loadſtone, when

our

our longing for, and haſtening toward the Center of Happineſs, doth not *decreaſe*, but *increaſe*.

XXXV.

It is a ſtrange thing, that Love to the Creature ſhould be ſtronger than Love to God; and that many are continually ſacrificing their *Lives* to the Love of the Creature, whilſt there are ſo few that are willing to ſacrifice Life, or any of its Enjoyments, to the Creator. The Power of Darkneſs, and the Deceit of the Heart, are ſo great in Men, that they reckon it Madneſs to do ſo much for God as thouſands are doing for the Creature.

O Thou, *who art the Fountain, and exceeding great Reward of perfect Love! make me truly thankful for this great Mercy, in giving me a Senſe of theſe things: And ſtrengthen me with thy heavenly Aids, to overcome all Hindrances that oppoſe my conſtant acting for thee, and according to thy divine Light and Guidance.* Do thou *guide me* continually by thy *Counſel here*, and afterward receive me to Glory.

F I N I S.

SERMONS and BOOKS Publiſhed by the Author of this Treatiſe.

I. A Funeral Sermon, for Mr. *Caleb Head:* With an Account of his *Converſion* and *early Piety*, 1707. The Fourth Edition.

II. A Sermon preach'd at his leaving an Evening Lecture in *Southwark*, 1708.

III. A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers*, on Occaſion of the *Publick Thankſgiving*, *Nov.* 22. 1709.

IV. *The Love of one another the great Duty of Chriſtians:* In two Sermons; the one preach'd the *5th* of *Nov.* the other the Thankſgiving-Day, the *7th* of *Nov.* 1710. The Second Edition corrected.

V. A Funeral Sermon for Dr. *Upton*, 1711.

VI. A Sermon preach'd to a *Society* of *Young Men*, Jan. 1. 1712.

VII. A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers*, on Occaſion of the *Publick Faſt*, Jan. 16. 1712.

VIII. To be *every where ſpoken againſt*, at firſt *the Caſe of the Chriſtians themſelves*, and now *of the Proteſtant Diſſenters:*

ters: Consider'd in two Sermons preach'd on *Acts* xxviii. 22. preach'd *March* 9, and 16. 1712.

IX. Of *forgetting the wonderful Works of God.* A Sermon preach'd on *Nov.* 5. 1712.

X. Seasonable Advice *not to forsake the Publick Assemblies for Religious Worship.* A Sermon preach'd to a Society of young Men, *Jan.* 1. 1714.

XI. The *mischievous Consequences of publick Strife and Envy.* A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers* on *January* 31. 1713-14.

XII. Of *praying for the King.* A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers, Octob.* 24. 1714. being the first Lord's-Day after the King's Coronation.

XIII. Of *Honouriug the King.* A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers, Jan.* 20. 1714-15. being the Day appointed for a *Publick Thanksgiving* to Almighty God on account of *His Present Majesty's peaceable and quiet Possession of the Throne of* Great Britain.

XIV. A Sermon preach'd before the *Societies for Reformation of Manners,* at *Salters-Hall, June* 27. 1715.

XV. Our *present Deliverance manifestly owing to the Help of God.* A Sermon preach'd at *Black-Friers,* on the Day of Thanksgiving for *suppressing the late unnatural*

natural Rebellion, June 7. 1716. the *Second Edition.*

XVI. A Funeral Sermon for Mr. *James Coningham*, A.M. *Sept.* 9. 1716. the 2d Edition.

XVII. A Funeral Sermon for Mr. *John Mills*, Merchant, Oct. 13 1717.

XVIII. *Salvation from Popiſh Counſels, and from a Popiſh Prince, the Joy of Britain.* A Sermon preach'd on the *Fifth* of *November*, in the Year 1717. Wherein the moſt conſiderable Things contrived for the Eſtabliſhment of *Popery* under the *firſt Popiſh Prince* that ſhould be ſettled on the *Throne of England*, are faithfully extracted out of the *Jeſuits Memorial* preſented to King *James* II.

XIX. A Sermon preach'd on the KING's Birth-Day, to the *Morning-Lecture Society* in little St. *Helens*, 1718.

XX. *Salvation from Popiſh Counſels, and from a Popiſh Prince, the Joy of* Britain. Part. II. A Sermon preach'd *Nov.* 5. 1718.

XXI. The *Greatneſs of our Salvation* by King WILLIAM III. A Sermon preach'd *Nov.* 5. 1719.

XXII. The Duty *of holding faſt the Form of ſound Words, as delivered in the* SCRIPTURES. A Sermon preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. *Obadiah Hughes*, Mr. *Clerk Oldiſworth*, Mr. *Thomas Newman*, and

and Mr. *John Smith*, at the *Old Jewry*, *Jan.* 11. 1720-21.

XXIII. Our *preſent Health and Safety owing entirely to the Mercies of God.* A Sermon preach'd on the Day of *Thankſgiving* for our *Preſervation* from the PLAGUE, *April* 25. 1723.

XXIV. A Diſcourſe againſt Swearing.

XXV. The *Lordſhip* of CHRIST conſidered, as it extends both to the Dead and Living; and as acquired by his *dying*, *riſing again*, and *reviving*. In two Sermons preach'd at the Merchants-Lecture at *Salters-Hall*, *July* 28. and *Auguſt* 11. 1724. The Second Edition.

XXVI. The Change of *Times* and *Seaſons* conſider'd and improv'd, both as referring to private Life, and to the Kingdoms of this World. A Sermon preach'd at *Salters-Hall*, *Octob.* 20. 1724.

XXVII. A Treatiſe on the *Religious Obſervation* of the LORD'S-DAY, according to the expreſs Words of the *Fourth Commandment*. The Third Edition.

XXVIII. A Treatiſe on the *Deceitfulneſs* of *Sin*; and its leading Men to *Hardneſs* of Heart; with the Means appointed to prevent both its hardening and deceiving. The Fourth Edition.

XXIX. The *General Mourning* religiouſly improved, in a Sermon on the Death of King GEORGE I.

XXX.

XXX. Some Thoughts on the KINGS of this *Earth*, bringing their Glory into the *heavenly City*. A Sermon preach'd at *Salters-Hall*, *Octob.* 31. 1727.

XXXI. The *Great Concern* of Human Life: Or a Summary Account of the *Fear* of GOD, and *keeping* his *Commandments*. The Second Edition with Additions.

XXXII. *Human Virtues:* Or a Collection of the *Rules* of *Scripture*, that teach Men to *live ſoberly*, and to be happy in *themſelves*.

XXXIII. A Sermon occaſion'd by the Death of the late Reverend Mr. THOMAS COTTON, M. A. Preach'd at *Hampſtead*, *July* 26, 1730. To which is added a *Diſcourſe* at the *Grave*.

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Burke's Anecdotes
Vol. 1st p. 12.

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[illegible] Annotes
Par. pth. p. 12.